

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Agriculture in Illinois-School Reorganization Oral History project

Interview AI-A-L-2012-037

Sheila Simon, Lieutenant Governor, was interviewed on August 10, 2012 as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Agriculture in Illinois- School Reorganization Oral History* project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: August 10, 2012

Location: Illinois State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: Pam Bruzan, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Susan Seiber and Jan Culp, ALPL volunteers

Total Pages: 18 pgs Total Time: 0:37 / 0.62 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 11, 2012.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon, *Agriculture in Illinois*, AI-A-L-2012-037

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon was born on March 13, 1961 in Troy, Illinois. She graduated from Winston Churchill High School in Potomac, Maryland in 1979, while her father, Paul Simon, served in Congress, representing Illinois's 24th District. Sheila earned a BA from Wittenberg University, in Springfield, Ohio, majoring in political science. She earned a law degree from Georgetown University. Since earning her degree in 1987, Simon has worked at a law firm, served as an assistant state's attorney and a faculty member at the Southern Illinois University School of Law in Carbondale, Illinois. She was asked by Pat Quinn to fill an open lieutenant governor position, following the 2010 Democratic primary, and Quinn/Simon won the election that fall.

As lieutenant governor, Simon is the administration's education spokesperson and represents the executive branch on several committees. One of her responsibilities included the Classroom First Commission, which studied the obstacles educators faced with school reorganization. Lieutenant Governor Simon chaired the commission, which in June 2012, presented twenty-three recommendations on reorganization, school/educational efficiency and within district efficiency for potential State Board or legislative action. The commission presented findings related to the cost of forced reorganization and encouraged "virtual" consolidation and voluntary reorganization. As Governor Quinn's chief education advisor, Lieutenant Governor Simon had a leadership role on the P-20 Council—pre-k to graduate school—and also worked with Illinois's community colleges.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Classroom First Commission; school reorganization; obstacles/recommendations for reorganization; property tax extension law limit; teacher's pensions; school transportation issues; state aid to schools; Medicare; P-20 Council; school construction; non contiguous districts; cooperative high schools; virtual consolidation; "one size fits all" state incentives; dual/unit districts; State Board of Education; Race to the Top;

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