

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Christine Radogno

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Illinois Statecraft-Legislators* Oral History project

Interview # ISL-A-L-2021-032

Senator Christine Radogno, an Illinois State Senator from 1997 through July 2017, including service as Republican Minority Leader, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft - Legislators* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Sep 10, 11, 30 2021      Location: Westmont Public Library, Westmont, IL

Date: Nov 18, 2021      Location: Telephonic interview in ALPL Recording Studio

Date: Dec 9, 2021      Location: Westmont Public Library, Westmont, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript being  
processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 2:32 + 2:17 + 2:23 + 2:04 + 1:43 + 2:17 / 2.53 + 2.28 + 2.38 + 2.06 + 1.72 + 2.28 = 13.25 hrs.

Session 1: Early life thru years on LaGrange County Board and election to IL Senate

Session 2: IL Senate from 1997 through 2006, including Edgar, Ryan & Blagojevich

Session 3: Blagojevich administration & experiences with IL Senator Barack Obama

Session 4: Blagojevich impeachment and Gov. Quinn administration thru 2012

Session 5: Quinn administration in 2013-2014 and elections of 2014

Session 6: Budget crisis during the Gov. Rauner administration and Grand Bargain

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 28, 2021.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

## Abstract

### Christine Radogno, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISL-A-L-2021-032

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Christine (Hoy) Radogno was born on December 21, 1952 in Oak Park, Illinois, and grew up in an Irish Catholic family in Wheaton and LaGrange. She graduated in Lyons Township High School in 1969 at 16, then attended Loyola University, graduating with a masters' degree in 1974 in social work. That same year she married Nunzio Radogno, who was studying to become a lawyer at the time.

In 1989 Radogno was elected to the LaGrange Village Board after getting involved in a fight to block the construction of a new Fire Station in a residential district. Due to her increasing visibility, the Republican Party leadership asked her to run for the Illinois Senate in 1996, a race which she won. That same year Barack Obama was also elected to the Illinois Senate. Radogno continued to serve in the Illinois Senate through the Gov. Jim Edgar, George Ryan and Rod Blagojevich era, eventually taking a leadership position in the Republican caucus. In 2009, following Minority Leader Frank Watson's retirement due to a stroke, Senator Radogno became the Minority Leader. She served in that position throughout the six years of the Governor Pat Quinn administration from 2009 to January 2015, as well as in the early years of the Gov. Bruce Rauner administration. Radogno supported the new Governor's turn-around agenda, but due to solid Democratic majorities in both the IL Senate and House, Rauner's proposals went nowhere. It was during his administration that the state went for over two years without a budget. (Due to court orders, state employees continued to be paid, while many businesses and individuals with contracts with the state went unpaid.) Frustrated by the lack of progress and Rauner's reluctance to negotiate and compromise, Senator Radogno worked with Senate President John Cullerton to develop a 'Grand Bargain' which would get the state past the impasse. When that bargain fell apart in June 2017, Radogno felt she had done all she could and resigned, effective July 1. A budget was subsequently passed, but only after several Republican defections.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Illinois Senate; Senator John Cullerton; Gov. Rod Blagojevich impeachment; Gov. Pat Quinn; Gov. Bruce Rauner; Radogno & Cullerton's 'Grand Bargain'; Gov. Rauner's 'Turn Around' Agenda; Gov. Jim Edgar; Gov. George Ryan; LaGrange, Illinois; Sen. Barack Obama; Sen. James 'Pate' Philip; Sen. Frank Watson; Sen. Bill Brady;

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