

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with State Representative Elaine Nekritz

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis in Illinois Oral History project

Interview # ISC-A-L-2015-047

Elaine Nekritz, State Representative for the 57th District, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: October 1, 2015 Location: Buffalo Grove, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:28 / 1.47 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 16, 2015.

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

Interview being
processed

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Abstract

Elaine Nekritz, Illinois Statecraft-Pension Crisis, ISC-A-L-2015-047

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Elaine Nekritz was born in 1957 in Wichita, Kansas, and graduated from high school in Wichita in 1975. She earned a BA from Trinity University (San Antonio, Texas) in Economics in 1979, and a Law Degree from the University of Michigan in 1982. Elaine worked in a downtown Chicago law firm from 1982 thru 1991, specializing in litigation and real estate law. In 1995 she ran for the Illinois General Assembly as a Democrat. Although unsuccessful at that time, she was later elected to the Illinois House of Representatives in 2003. (She had earlier served as a legislative aide for Representative and later Senator Jeff Schoenberg.) Rep. Nekritz has served as a state representative through the time of the interview, serving on the Judiciary (chair), Appropriations, Public Utilities, and Chair of the Personnel and Pension Committees. Rep. Nekritz was on the bipartisan Working Group Pension Committee which drafted and eventually passed Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) in 2013.

This interview details the legislative activity starting in 1989 that resulted in adding the cost of living allowance (COLA) section to the pension benefit package. Rep. Nekritzz discusses pension legislation, including SB512, HB 6258, SB 2404, and SB 1 (Public Act 98-0599). She reviews how the SB 1 legislation was developed, and the conflicting approaches that were taken by the Illinois House and Senate. Representative Nekritz reviewed pension events that had a major role in the state's current pension crisis, including the 1995 Edgar pension reform, Governor Rod Blagojevich's pension holidays, the 2008 recession, various bond sales, the 2009 Pension Task Force, the role of the temporary income tax increase of 2011, and the creation of a Tier 2 employee system. She talks about the recent court cases that invalidated many of the legislative and municipal reforms of SB 1. At the end of the interview, Representative Nekritz examines the workability of the pension cost shift, re-amortization, actuarial challenges due to beneficiary longevity, the difficulty of any constitutional amendments due to Federal Contract Law, bond rating impacts, and other legislation that has been recently proposed.

Subject Headings/Key Words: pension crisis in Illinois; Senate Bill 1 (2013); Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability Pension Reports; Illinois Supreme Court decision on SB 1 pension reform; Illinois legislature's bipartisan Pension Committee; 1995 pension reform during Edgar administration; Gov. Blagojevich pension holiday

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