

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with former State Representative Darlene Senger

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Illinois Pension Crisis* Oral History project

Interview # ISC-A-L-2015-050

Representative Senger, an Illinois state representative, discusses her involvement with Illinois pension legislation through her work on the House Pension Committee. She was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis in Illinois* oral history project

Interview dates & location:

Date: Oct 23, 2015    Location: Santori Public Library, Aurora, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

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

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

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_    Total Time: 1:35 / 1.58 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 26, 2016.

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

Transcript  
being processed

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# Abstract

## Darlene Senger, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISC-A-L-2015-050

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Darlene Senger was born in Hammond, Indiana in 1955. She grew up in Hammond and graduated from high school in 1973. She earned a BA from Purdue University, majoring in finance and marketing, and followed this with an MBA from DePaul University. Darlene worked at the Chicago 1st National Bank from 1979 to 1984). She then spent six years at SEI (Systems Evolution, Inc.) working with institutional pensions. She began her political career serving on the Naperville City Council from 2002 to 2008. This led to her run for an IL House of Representatives seat in 2008 as a Republican. She served for three terms, from 2009 to 2014. While there, she was assigned to the education, appropriations, human services, revenue oversight, financial institutions, mass transit as well as the pension investment and personnel and pension committees. She also served on the bipartisan Pension Committees from 2010-13, and Governor Quinn's pension working group. After redistricting took place, Darlene left the State House to run in the primary for Congress. She won the Republican primary but was unsuccessful in the General Election. Darlene worked for the Illinois Policy Institute at the time of this interview.

This interview details the work done by the various legislative committees that eventually led to the passage of a pension reform bill, Senate Bill 1, in 2013. Rep. Senger discusses the negotiations over SB 1, and why that bill was chosen over other legislation. She also covers SB 1's review by the courts leading to its being found unconstitutional in 2015. Rep. Senger addresses the roles of that COLAs, pension enhancements, investment income, recessions, pension holidays, and bond sales played in pension under-funding. She explains why actuarial voids helped lead to problems and how Governor Edgar's 1995 pension funding reform and the newly created Tier 2 employee impacted pensions today.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** causes of the Illinois' pension underfunding; Senate Bill 1 in 2013; actuarial analysis of Illinois pensions; Gov. Jim Edgar's pension reform in 1995; adoption of Tier 2 employees in 2010; bond sales for pensions; impact of COLA on pensions

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