

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Senator Kimberly Lightford

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Education is Key-1985 Educational Reform Act* Oral History project

Interview # E85-A-L-2015-042

Senator Kimberly Lightford, a member of the IL Senate Education Committee, discusses the legacy of the 1985 Education Reform Act and school discipline issues as part of the *Education is Key-1985 Education Reform Act* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Sept. 14, 2015      Location: Senate District Office Westchester, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

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

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

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Transcript  
being processed

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# Abstract

Senator Kimberly Lightford, 1985 Education Reform Act, E85-A-L-2015-041

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Kimberly Lightford was born in Chicago, Illinois in May, 1968. Her family later moved to Maywood, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, and she graduated from Proviso East High School. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Western Illinois University (Public Communication/Human Relations 1991) and an MA from the University of Illinois-Springfield. Kimberly started her career working in the Office of Secretary of State, the Department of Corrections, and then Central Management Services. In 1998, Lightford won election to the IL State Senate, becoming the youngest African-American woman to be elected to the Illinois Senate. She still served in the Senate at the time of this interview. Her committee assignments include vice-chair of the Education Committee, Assignments, Executive, Committee of the Whole, Executive Appointments, Energy and Public Utilities, and Labor Subcommittees on Civil Rights Special Issues, Charter Schools, and Oversight of Medicaid Managed Care. She also serves as the chair of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus and has sponsored legislation dealing with the Illinois minimum wage and predatory lending practices. In education, she has sponsored bills dealing with school discipline, Senate Bill 7 (on teacher hiring and dismissal), and dropout prevention.

This interview details the legacy and modifications of the 1985 Education Reforms from Lightford's perspective as a legislator and parent. Covered are topics related to student learner goals, state assessments, school report cards, teacher evaluation, Prekindergarten at Risk, full day kindergarten, staff development, the Illinois Math-Science Academy, teacher certification, alternative education, student remediation programs, and school discipline policies.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** 1985 Education Reform Act; teacher evaluation and tenure in Illinois; Illinois policies on school discipline; Illinois state assessments for education; Senate Bill 7; school funding; school report cards; role of principals as instructional leaders

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