

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Robert Bruno, PhD

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Illinois Public School Funding Oral History project*

Interview # EF-A-L-2020-037

Dr. Robert Bruno, director of the University of Illinois's Labor Education Program, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Public School Funding Oral History project*.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Mar 3, 2020

Location: Chicago office of the Illinois Dept. of Labor Relations, University of Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio/Digital Video

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

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

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

Transcript being  
processed

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 2:09 / 2.15 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on November 17, 2020.

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

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## Abstract

### Robert Bruno, *Education is Key – Funding*, EF-A-L-2020-037

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Robert Bruno was born in Youngstown, Ohio in August 1955. He graduated from Struthers, Ohio High School in 1973, and earned a BA degree in political science from Ohio University in 1977 and an MA degree from Bowling Green University in 1980. Bruno later earned PhD from New York University in Political Theory-American Politics in 1994. Robert's work experiences include teaching history in New Jersey, being a site director and guidance counselor for a United Auto Workers/General Motors Education project and teaching as an adjunct professor at Union County College in Cranford, New Jersey. In 1995, Dr. Bruno joined the faculty at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) in the School of Employment Relations: Labor Education Program, serving as an Assistant, and Associate Professor. In 2007, Dr. Bruno became the director of the Labor Education Program. He is the author of four books dealing with the U.S. steelworkers, Chicago teamsters, Chicago working class churches, and the Chicago teachers strike of 2012. The book on the strike, *The Fight for the Soul of Public Education* was an award winning book. Dr. Bruno has published numerous articles and journals on collective bargaining, union operations, working class standards, and wage issues. At the time of the interview he served as board president for the Glen Ellyn District 41 School District (Prek-8).

Dr. Bruno examined the history and impact of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) strike of 2012 and its impact later on a one day strike in 2016 and an eleven day strike of 2019. The discussion included the historic nature of the 2012 strike due to state laws limiting bargaining topics and increasing the percentage needed to authorize a strike. Bruno emphasized the grassroots and community driven support provided to the CTU. He also examined earlier studies on the impact to schools and the community due to the loss of steel worker jobs as plants closed, the reforms made in the Chicago Teamster Union, and the impact of working class churches to their neighborhoods. Dr. Bruno reviewed the impact of school funding reform (Evidenced Based Funding), the closure of neighborhood schools, TIF (Tax Increment Financing) funding for Schools, the impact of charter schools, collective bargaining contracts and future challenges for schools related to funding.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** *Steelworker Alley: How Class Works in Youngstown; Reforming the Chicago Teamsters; Justified by Work: Identity and the Meaning of Faith in Chicago's Working Class Churches; Chicago teacher's strike of 2012; Chicago public school funding challenges; Board of Education for an Elementary School District 41 (Glen Ellyn); impact of factory closures on schools*

**Notes to the Reader:** Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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