

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Rep. Robert (Bob) Pritchard

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Education is Key – Public School Funding* Oral History project

Interview # EF-A-L-2019-067

Representative Robert Pritchard, a farmer and politician with decades of experience in education, 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 date & location:

Date: Sept. 3, 2019    Location: Rural Hinckley, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

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

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

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_    Total Time: 1:37 / 1.62

Interview being  
processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 5, 2020.

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

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## Abstract

### Robert Pritchard, *Education is Key – Funding*, EF-A-L-2019-067

**Biographical Information/Overview:** Robert (Bob) Pritchard was born in Aurora, Illinois in 1945. He grew up on a farm outside of Hinckley, Illinois graduating from Hinckley-Big Rock High School in 1963. Bob graduated from the University of Illinois in 1967, majoring in Ag Communications. In 1968 he earned Masters' degree from the U of I, majoring in Radio-TV production and direction. Bob worked at WMT Cedar Rapids, Iowa as a radio/television farm and weather reporter from 1968-71. He then became an assistant professor and extension editor at Iowa State University (Ames) from 1971-74. In 1979, he returned to Illinois and the family farm but also served as DeKalb County Extension Advisor. In addition to farming, Robert worked in various management positions for Dekalb Genetics Corporation from 1988-98. In 1998 he became the Director of Industry Affairs and manager of Public and Governmental Affairs for Monsanto. In 2003 Pritchard was the executive director for the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation based in Macomb, Illinois. Later that year he was selected to finish a term as Illinois State Representative for the 70th District. He held this office until 2018. As a State Representative, Robert served on a number of education task forces and co-chaired the Illinois Legislative Education Caucus for eleven years. He also served on the Higher Education House committee and the K-12 Curriculum and Policy Committee. Robert has been active with the Illinois Farm Bureau, the University of Illinois Extension programs, served as a university trustee, and was on the DeKalb County Board for thirteen years. Bob has received numerous awards for his work during his career.

Representative Pritchard discusses the history of Illinois public school funding from his perspective of a longtime State Representative, school board member, university trustee, county board member and farm land owner. He reviews school funding in Illinois going back to the 1820's, and talks about the impact of 1) the state's income tax, first passed in 1969, 2) the changing State Constitution in 1970, 3) the many school funding task forces and commissions, 4) the unsuccessful Constitutional Amendment regarding Article X (Education), 5) the various legislative attempts to change Illinois school funding regarding equity and later adequacy, and 6) the Legislative Study Groups. Rep. Pritchard (Republican) discusses how he became aware of the New Evidence Based School Funding Model because of his participation in the 2008 National Louis School Funding Task Force, which eventually led to the Governor's Task Force of 2016, Senate Bill 1, and finally SB 1947. He reviewed the problems posed by Chicago Public School pensions, and other issues.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** history of Illinois Public School Funding from 1820-1980; Article X of the Illinois State Constitution; Illinois property taxes and school funding; tax swap between property and income taxes; Senate Bill 1; Senate Bill 1947 of 2017; PTELL (Property Tax Extension Law Limit); TIFs

**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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