

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Henry Scheff

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft Oral History project

Interview # ISC-A-L-2015-056

Henry (Hank) Scheff, a longtime AFSCME Communications Director, 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: Oct 14, 2015

Location: AFSCME headquarters, Chicago, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Interview being
Transcribed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:38 / 1.63 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.

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Abstract

Henry Scheff, Illinois Statecraft, ISC-A-L-2015-056

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Henry (Hank) Scheff was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1950. He graduated South Shore High School in 1967 and earned a BS degree from Grinnell College (Iowa) in 1971, majoring in political science. Scheff also did graduate level work in employee benefits at Roosevelt University, Northwestern University, and the Wharton School in Pennsylvania. He worked as a research director for the Citizen Action Program and then the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. His field involved research and union organizing. In 1981, Scheff joined AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) Council 31, where he served as Director of Communication and later Director of Research and Employee Benefits. After retiring, Scheff continued as a consultant, serving as the plan administrator for AFSCME Council 31's employee benefit plan, including the innovative Health Improvement Plan.

This interview covers the objectives and functions of AFSCME Council 31. Scheff discussed the role of pension legislation on AFSCME membership, and the involvement of AFSCME in discussions on pension legislation in Illinois. Hank also covers the impact of Governor Jim Edgar's pension reform in 1995, and the concessions made by union membership. He also covered other major pension changes, including compounded COLAs, the Rule of 85 (dealing with calculations for retirement age), a formula change in 1997, and the establishment of Tier 2 employees of 2011. He talked about the role of *We Are One Illinois*, a Union Coalition that included AFSCME, as it dealt with pension legislation leading to Senate Bill 1 in 2013. Also discussed were the state funding issues that have hurt the system, including pension holidays, pension underfunding, and recessions.

Subject Headings/Key Words: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and public sector employee pensions; legislation creating compounded COLAs; Rule of 85 eligibility; Illinois's Senate Bill 1 of 2013; pension holidays in Illinois; pension bond sales; Tier 2 public sector employees; Governor Edgar's 1995 Pension Reform Law; *We Are One Illinois* and its role in pension crisis; differences in Illinois public sector unions;

Note 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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