

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with State Rep. William (Will) Davis

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

Interview # EF-A-L-2019-052

William Davis, a state representative, 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.

Date: July 23, 2019 Location: E. Hazel Crest, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:54 / 1.9 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on February 3, 2020.

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

Interview being
processed

© 2019 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

William Davis, *Education is Key-Funding*, EF-A-L-2019-052

Biographical Information/Overview: William (Will) Davis was born in Harvey, Illinois in 1968. He attended public schools in the area, graduating from Thornridge High School. Will then attended Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (SIUC), majoring in political science. Upon graduating in 1986, Will worked for SIUC-Carbondale as a college recruiter focusing on minority students located in northern Illinois and urban areas. He then became a legislative aide for Congressman Jessie Jackson Jr. In 2003, he ran for state representative. Winning that election, Rep. Davis served the south suburban area, where he still served at the time of the interview. Rep. Davis served as the Vice-Chairman for the Elementary and Secondary Education Appropriations Committee and on the Higher Education Appropriations Committee. He also serves on Labor, Tollway, International Trade and Commerce, and Health and Health Care Disparities committees. At the time of the interview, Rep. Davis was working on his Master of Public Administration Degree at Governor's State University. He is a founding member of the Better Funding for Better Schools Coalition. He served on the foundation board for South Suburban College. He has also been recognized as the "Legislator of the Year" by the Illinois Association of Code Enforcement, the Illinois Primary Healthcare Association, and the Illinois Association of Park Districts. Rep. Davis has represented Illinois at many national meetings regarding school funding reform.

Davis reviews the status of school funding from 2003-2019, discussing challenges in funding for south suburban school districts. He also talks about the various efforts to try to change the school funding formula such as a swap of property taxes for state income tax, revenue neutral taxes to combat the Robin Hood effect, and increasing the foundation and poverty grant levels. He also discusses the near-passage of a New Evidence Based Model (Senate Bill 1). Its failure led to SB 1947, which passed in a bipartisan vote in 2017. This new funding formula, which includes twenty-seven categories, is of interest to school districts across the nation.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Illinois School Funding; Chicago Public Schools; Robin Hood Effect Revenue Neutral; property tax swap; Vision 20/20; New Evidence Based School Funding; Governor's Funding Commission (2016); Senate Bill 1947 of 2017

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.

COPYRIGHT

The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without the authorization from the Audio-Visual Curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 112 N. 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Telephone (217) 785-7955