

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Larry Bomke

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

Interview # ISL-A-L-2017-001

Larry Bomke, a former Illinois State Senator from central Illinois from 1995 to 2013, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft - Legislators* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Jan 6, 2017; Jan 27, 2017; Feb 3, 2017; Feb 17, 2017

Location: Bomke's Insurance office, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:21 + 1:30 + 1:51 + 1:54 / 1.35 + 1.5 + 1.85 + 1.9 =
6.6 hrs.

Session 1: Early life and experiences at precinct level politics

Session 2: Sangamon County Board experiences

Session 3: State Senator experiences from 1995 to 2003 and memories of Sen Obama

Session 4: Blagojevich administration, impeachment and Bomke's final years in office

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on April 19, 2017.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

© 2017 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Abstract

Larry Bomke, *Illinois Statecraft*, ISL-A-L-2017-001

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Larry Bomke was born on June 6th, 1950 in Springfield, Illinois, and grew up on a small farm near Pleasant Plains, Illinois. He graduated from Pleasant Plains High School in 1968 and attended Lincoln Land Community College for a short time before leaving school to take a job at the state's highway department. For the next few years, he alternated between selling insurance and working for the state. He also became involved in precinct-level politics as a Republican, and was selected as a precinct committeeman at age twenty-one. In 1974 he became one of ten district chairmen, and in 1976 he was elected to the Sangamon County Board.

By this time, Bomke had a successful insurance business, and over the years became more involved in county politics as well. He served on the Sangamon County Board from 1977 through June, 1995, taking a keen interest in the county's finances in the early years, which soon led to his chairing the Finance Committee. In 1992 Bomke became the Chairman of the Sangamon County Board. In 1995 Karen Hasara, who was representing Springfield in the Illinois Senate, resigned to run for mayor of Springfield, and the Sangamon County Republican party leaders appointed Bomke to replace her. The next year he successfully ran for reelection. While a member of the Illinois Senate, Bomke was involved in many of the key issues the Senate took up. He was in the Senate during the years that Barack Obama was also a member, but has few memories of the future president's time there. Bomke discussed the state's serious public pension shortfall, Governor George Ryan's 'Illinois First' project, and especially the various abuses that occurred during the administration of Governor Rod Blagojevich. In early 2008, in fact, Senator Bomke publicly recommended that the Illinois House begin impeachment proceedings against Gov. Blagojevich. He got nowhere with that request, but was vindicated when the Governor was arrested in December, 2008. Bomke also shared his reflections on the governorship of Pat Quinn, and on the decline of the Republican Party in Illinois, especially after Governor George Ryan's corruption trial. Bomke decided to retire from the Senate in 2013, but continued in his private insurance practice.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Illinois State Senate, 1995-2013; Sangamon County Board politics, mid 1970s thru 1995; Governor Rod Blagojevich; Governor George Ryan; Gov. Jim Edgar; State Senator Barack Obama; William (Bill) Cellini; impeachment of Gov. Rod Blagojevich; Illinois pension crisis; Senator James 'Pate' Philip; Senator Emil Jones; Senator John Cullerton; Dick Austin;

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.

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