

The Illinois Report 2009

Introduction

Transcript of video interview with IGPA Director Robert F. Rich

“The Illinois Report 2009 has just been released by the Institute of Government and Public Affairs. We consider this to be our premier, signature publication. It has been issued for the third time. Our major audience for this is Illinois policymakers, in particular the Illinois General Assembly. We have designed this report so that it provides evidence-based, non-partisan analysis of the major issues facing Illinois.

“So, we have looked at the Illinois economy, the budget, obesity in terms of health care, we have a special chapter on education, this time looking at work force development, and not simply at issues of funding and access. Similarly, in higher education, we’ve not simply looked at issues of funding and access, but have focused on the whole area of P through 20, and the development of P through 20 councils and there have emphasized the transition between various levels of education, and asked the question about how well prepared the one level is in terms of the next -- so is high school to college a smooth transition, is middle school to high school a smooth transition?

“We also have a really interesting chapter on child care and in that chapter we’re saying that although Illinois ranks very well in terms of the number of child care facilities and in terms of so-called coverage of child care facilities, quality is a different issue and we don’t rank so well in terms of quality. We’ve done a special chapter on emergency preparedness and the digital divide, and the final chapter for the report is interesting, because it looks at the potential impact of the 2008 election. And, there we’ve looked at questions of campaign financing and early voting and the question of race and public policy.

“The key underlying issue for Illinois is the economy, and there we focus on the structural deficit, meaning we have more recurring expenditures than we do recurring revenue. And unless we address the structural deficit, we’re not going to be able to address the rest of the issues facing Illinois. Parallel to that is we have a crisis in how we make policy in Illinois. We need to address the whole issue of the policymaking process, its integrity and ethics.

“So, it’s our hope that the General Assembly and policymakers will find this to be a really useful document in terms of helping to seed discussions or deliberations on the most important issues facing Illinois.”