

Catholic Conference of Illinois Interview

**Senator Bill Brady
(Republican)**

August 24, 2010

Bold marks a question asked by the interviewed, *italics marks follow-up question.*

Question: How did you get involved in politics? What or who motivated you to get into politics?

I grew up in a family that was politically involved. I'd say my parents motivated me more than anybody to give back to our community and for me politics or public service is one of the best ways to give back.

Question: Who are your political heroes? In public service, political realm?

In the public service realm I'd say that Ronald Reagan I looked up to probably because of my age and the significance of what he was able to accomplish. Of course, studying other people--Winston Churchill to Abraham Lincoln--were awfully impressive political figures and I'd even say to some extent Pope John Paul II was a political figure in cracking the communist wall. His leadership in Poland served as one of the greatest political figures in our lifetime.

Question #1: Ultrasound

Do you support or oppose The Ultrasound Opportunity Act (House Bill 5743), which mandates abortion facilities offer women seeking abortion an opportunity to view an ultrasound of their unborn baby?

Yes. Anything we can do to give individuals the greatest knowledge possible that would lead them to make as conscious a decision as possible about protecting human life it is incumbent upon us for us to do so.

Question: In your view, how might the state move toward a greater respect for the sanctity of life?

Obviously, parental notification is something I and many others fought long hard for as we worked to put a law in place that hopefully the Illinois Supreme Court will adopt shortly. It's taken so long to enact. As Governor I'll push for enactment of the parental notification law. Every parent deserves the right to know about what medical procedure their minor child goes through. Other areas the state can recommend is to provide alternatives to abortion. Obviously I am prolife. The constraints that the federal law and the US Supreme Court have placed limit what any Governor can do, but there is still a great deal that we can do to help pregnant women in difficult pregnancies—we want them to choose life. We'll work to put those supports in place as well as increase support for adoption.

Question #2: Vouchers

Do you support or oppose legislation (Senate Bill 2494) offering tuition vouchers to parents of students in underperforming and overcrowded schools so they may choose a quality, state recognized non-public school?

Yes I fought for passage of that in the House and the Senate. I worked across party lines. Unfortunately, Governor Quinn's refusal to support the initiative reduced our ability to receive the requisite number of votes in the House. Parental choice in education is paramount to bringing the best educational opportunities to our children for several reasons. This isn't about doing anything but enhancing the public school system. Competition, be it through charter schools, private schools, the tuition tax credit, or vouchers, will bring about an environment that, I think, will enhance through competition -- like in the work force -- the public school system. If you give parents a choice in their child's education they are much more inclined to be involved in their child's education. There is nothing more important to the success of a child's education than the involvement of their parents or caregiver. So I support this bill and other initiatives to allow citizens, through referendum, the opportunity to have similar programs in their districts.

How do you answer the opposition who say that no public money goes to private schools?

I simply say that this gives an alternative—often this enhances per public funding in the public school. Look at charter schools—they give a good example in that what is working there.

Question #3: Death Penalty

Do you support or oppose the abolition of the death penalty (House Bill 5687)?

I must say that this is a difficult decision for me. I do support the continuation of the death penalty. I support the law of the land. Every safeguard should be undertaken and that this should be reserved for the most heinous crimes that exist. This will be the most difficult thing ever to observe as Governor—never have I stood between someone and their death. I will honor the law of the land and make sure that we take every safeguard possible to ensure that an innocent person was not wrongly put to death.

Question #4: Civil unions/Same Sex Marriage

Do you support or oppose legislation establishing civil unions for same-sex couples in Illinois (Senate Bill 1716)?

I oppose it—I believe marriage is a sacred institution between a man and a woman and should be maintained as such.

Question #5: Immigration

Would you support or oppose legislation in Illinois similar to Arizona's law - SB 1070? In part, SB 1070 originally allowed for local law enforcement to check the status of persons they stop legally whom they suspect are undocumented immigrants and made it a state crime to not carry the proper immigration documents.

The law in Arizona has certainly received a great deal of attention. I support Arizona's right to do what they think best and best serves their state. In Illinois we have a different situation. At the end of the day we need a federal solution that will bring about meaningful immigration reform. I thank God I live in a country where people are willing to risk their lives to get to, but I believe we have to preserve our borders for security of our country and our citizens particularly in these times. I also believe that much of the problem exists because we do not have a big enough door. Meaningful immigration reform would allow more legal immigration, in my mind, and work toward helping our economy and in many ways helping our country grow.

Question: Is there anything in addition you would like to say about the five questions?

Of our present time there is no greater social justice issue because the educational opportunities that are offered through an overcrowded public school system or through an underfunded school system affect some of the less fortunate demographic classes. Some would argue it is even a civil rights issue. If you look at where our schools are the most overcrowded, where they're having the most difficulty educating our children, they are clearly in some of the most heavily populated minority communities. I would agree with many that these conditions exist. It does become a social justice if not a civil rights issue for us as we plan to create a more level playing field. It is certainly an avenue for fairness.

I think this is indicative of why this election is about putting partisan politics aside. Yes, I'm a Republican. Yes, Senator Meeks is a Democrat, but if we're going to create an environment that works for parents and students -- for people of Illinois -- whether it be in education or work force we're going to have to set aside partisan boundaries traditionally and focus on what we can do to create the best school systems, the best job opportunities.

Senator Meeks and I have joined on many issues. Parental choice on education being one, as well as I've worked with colleagues on the other side of the aisle to bring jobs to Illinois. Take McCormick Place. This was a reasonable solution that had nothing to do with partisan politics but had to do with creating a better quality of life for the people of Illinois. We worked together to create a solution that saved jobs, that sold events in Illinois to the tune of one billion dollars -- all by setting aside those partisan differences. As Governor of the state I'm going work cross partisan boundaries to bring about reasonable and practical solutions that will enhance the quality of life of all in Illinois regardless of your party persuasion. We cannot afford partisan bickering. We need real leadership that will bring people together as opposed to the division that we have been struggling with, particularly over the past two years.

Question: In conclusion, is there anything you would like to say to the Catholics of Illinois about any other issues?

A lot of people ask me as a businessman with a family in Central Illinois why do you want to be Governor of Illinois. Part of the reason is that I look at Illinois like a glass that's over half full. Yes we have our political divisions that have to be overcome, we have our record deficits and debt, but I don't think there is a state with more opportunity to change the lives of the people and I don't think there is a time better to do that than today. This state has so much to offer -- a strong rooted agriculture base, a base rooted in our soil, an infrastructure that provides more air, rail, road and river per capita than any other in the nation. We have great colleges, universities, and hospitals. Illinois has over 13 million people located in the center of the country's economic universe, if not the world's. The problems that exist and the reason we have had record job losses, 700,000 we estimate in last decade, 200,000 in the last 15 months 20,000 in just the last reporting period, is because our leaders have failed to create an environment that allows families to create a livelihood through the use of those resources. We have penalized business. As Governor of this state, I not only want to create the finest school system through parental choice, but end the culture of corruption with term limits and contribution limits, and with legislative districts drawn by a computer, not political fiefdom. I want to create an economic fabric that will allow and help put Illinois families back to work creating livelihood and wealth. I really look at Illinois as a great opportunity to do that with all it has to offer.