

CENTER FOR STATE POLICY & LEADERSHIP 2017 Annual Report



UNIVERSITY OF
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SPRINGFIELD

LEADERSHIP
lived



Too Much Complexity?

Has life gotten too complex? There are reasons to think so. Choices and information proliferate around nearly every decision we face, taxing our brain's capacity to choose wisely. Go on Amazon to buy something, say, a towel rack, and spend the next two hours sorting through thirty-two pages of options for a decision that, not long ago, would have taken ten minutes at the local department store. Or sympathize with the college biology professor who must decide what, within the exponentially growing body of biological knowledge, to teach in the same three-hour course every year.

But, it's not just the growing volume of choices and knowledge we find daunting. It's that everything seems to relate to more and more other things, interacting in a profusion of ways beyond our comprehension. The globalized economy is the clearest case of this. But, it shows up as well in everyday life, from parents trying to navigate the complexity of their children's extracurricular activities, to confusion about the rules of conduct around different groups of people, to online musings that go viral for no good reason. It all seems too much to take in and make sense of.

Overmuch complexity also seems to underlie the hot temper now characterizing our political culture. Being hyper-divisive and uncompromising arises from an unwillingness to try to understand the other side. Understanding requires mental effort, a limited resource easily taxed into disuse by information overload. The ideologies that divide us cut through the complexity. Conservative, liberal, libertarian, populist, and so on – each belief system tells a story that makes everything seem simpler and clearer, and thus, less mentally taxing.



One way to consider the tribalism of our political moment is as a “falling back on” easier, less complex ways to think and be. From the Tea Party to the Sandernistas, the motive is to march forward without the mental burdens of nuance and ambiguity. If the price is deeper division, let the ballot box decide whose side will prevail, seems to be the argument.

Unfortunately, the result to date has been thin, unstable majorities, in which no position prevails for long. Fortunately, this may not last.

Being virulently opposed to others is, in its own way, draining, especially if the rewards are fleeting (e.g., tax cuts that may be reversed when that thin political majority changes hands). People learn, and, hence, they (we) may learn that it is more productive to make the effort to understand the other side, even amidst growing complexity, than to spend all our time fighting and never really gaining. We can at least hope for that.

This is all by way of pointing to the interesting perspective that complexity affords on the work of the Center for State Policy and Leadership, UIS' commitment to the public interest. The Center is situated squarely in the arena of politics and governing in Illinois, where the problems created by an increasingly complex world show up in surprising and unsurprising ways. In this annual report, we look at how the Center handled that complexity in 2017.

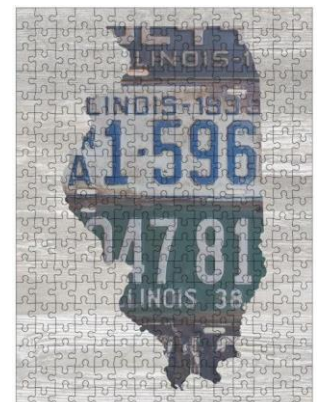
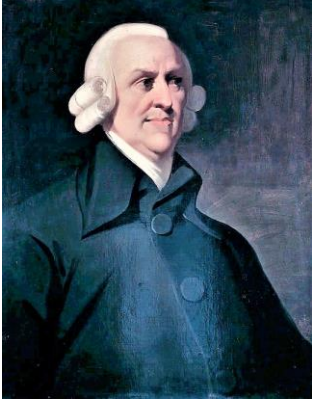


Table of Contents

Too much complexity?.....	2
Innovation Economy.....	3
Hope for Growth.....	3
Local Creativity.....	5
Next Generations.....	6
Priotizing the Less Advantaged.....	7
The Protection of Children.....	9
Schooling in the Time of Choice.....	9
Location, Location, Location.....	10
A Bright Spot for Public Service.....	11
Liberal Justice.....	12
Innocence for the Innocent.....	12
Hard Truths.....	13
Age of Re-enlightment.....	15
Governing with Truth.....	16
Making Budgets Intelligible.....	17
Money, Money, Money.....	18
CSPL Financials.....	20
Comings and Goings.....	20



Innovation Economy



While more complexity pervades nearly every aspect of modern life, our economic lives provide the most vivid account. And it begins with Adam Smith a quarter of a millennium ago. In the 18th century, Smith pointed to the division of labor in enabling free economies to develop and become more productive. As economies have evolved since then, they have indeed done so by finding ways to break economic activity down into ever finer parts. That is, they've become more specialized. So, Smith was right about that. Yet, we have also come to realize that increasing specialization and its consequences foster greater complexity, with often the opposite effect on productivity. Smith did not clearly see this other side of the division of labor coin.

In large part, economic complexity is a function of the growth of knowledge. A hundred years ago there were just doctors and surgeons. Today, we face a burgeoning variety of medical specialists, each of whom is master of some smallish part of the swelling corpus of medical knowledge. Just as it now takes more kinds of doctors to treat a person in the course of his or her life, it's often taking more researchers to make knowledge productive. Consider that today it requires 18 times as many researchers to fulfill Moore's Law – doubling the density of computer chips every two years – than it did in the 1970s.

[<https://web.stanford.edu/~chadi/IdeaPF.pdf>] It is not difficult to imagine how much more complex and costly it is to coordinate the work of 18 researchers compared, say, to three, or seven doctors compared, say, to two.

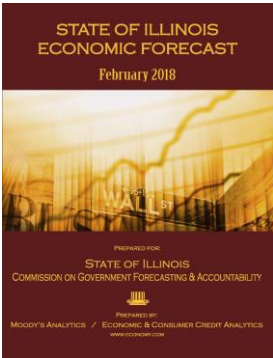
The hope -- in some sense the enduring hope of the American economy -- is that we will innovate our way out of unproductive complexity. Scientists may discover a more efficient path to Moore Law's for computer chips or something to replace chips altogether. Healthcare systems may, perhaps through technological advances, find ways to make it easier to coordinate patient care across providers. Name a complex economic challenge, and our cultural confidence in the promise of innovation gives us reason to be optimistic or at least less pessimistic.



Hope for Growth

In October, the University of Illinois and Gov. Bruce Rauner announced plans to build in Chicago's south loop a large public-private facility called the Discovery Partners Institute, dedicated to the kind of state-of-the-art innovation intended to juice the Illinois economy for the long-run. The announcement aired as Chicago was readying its bid to become the site of Amazon's second headquarters. Efforts to move Chicago and Illinois into the top tier of innovation economies last year came amidst a backdrop of continuing economic challenges that have kept the state from recovering as well as others have since the Great Recession in 2007-2009.

In January 2017, Brian Mackey reported for NPR Illinois on the bleak outlook for Illinois' economy described in Moody's Analytics annual economic forecast for the state's Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. [<http://nprillinois.org/post/report-bleak-future-illinois-economy>]



Moody's characterized Illinois as one of the Midwest region's "weakest links," with too little job creation and enormous fiscal problems owing to the lack of a state budget for a second year in a row. Wind the clock forward a year. The state finally has a budget, and Moody's, in its latest report, [<http://cgfa.ilga.gov/Upload/2018MoodyEconomyILForecast.pdf>] could point to modest economic gains in 2017. "August 2017 marked," said Moody's, "the first month since September 2015 that no Illinois metro was in recession." Despite some improvement, the state still ended the year with continuing weakness in job growth, as the size of the labor force dropped to its lowest point in ten years.

Illinois' economic challenges are typical for the Midwest, just more severe in many respects. One cause of sluggishness is population loss, meaning fewer people pursuing economic opportunity. The state saw its population decline by a net of 33,700 in 2017, the third year in row of losses. The decline has been widespread. Chicago has lost residents, and the bleeding of people from rural areas continues a long-term trend. "Many rural counties have declined in population...for many years," wrote Norman Walzer and Brian Hargar of Northern Illinois University for NPR Illinois in August, "with 45 rural counties...having a smaller population in 2016 than they did in 1950."

[<http://nprillinois.org/post/illinois-issues-rural-exodus#stream/0>]

The main driver of rural decline, said Walzer and Hargar, has been people moving away, rather than changes in birth and death rates. Diminishing populations in rural areas make it harder to sustain their economies. Residents end up having to travel long, costly distances when they need to access, for example, healthcare or auto repair services.



Illinois' lethargic job creation is of a piece with the more general loss of dynamism in the Illinois economy.

[http://econweb.umd.edu/~haltiwan/Davis_Haltiwanger_Jackson_Hole.pdf]

Over the past several years, employment has become increasingly concentrated in established businesses. The rate of startup activity has fallen fairly sharply from the levels it was a couple of decades ago. This pattern has characterized much of the larger U.S. economy; it's just that it has been more pronounced in Illinois than in many other states.

On its 2017 index of growth entrepreneurship, a measure of a more dynamic and open economy, the Kaufmann Foundation ranked Illinois 17th and Chicago 27th (out of 40 cities), not the worst showings but certainly not top tier either. [<https://www.kauffman.org/kauffman-index/reporting/growth-entrepreneurship>]

The planned Discovery Partners Institute may be able to move Illinois and Chicago higher on this index, but it won't be easy. Once the seedbed of entrepreneurial energy, technology industries no longer play that role to the same degree, as big, established companies like Google and Microsoft gobble up many startups as soon as they show promise. [<https://economics.mit.edu/files/12979>]

Local Creativity

Illinois is home to two large metros, Chicago and its surrounding counties and Metro East by St. Louis. During 2010-2016, these metros accounted for over 88 percent of the growth in the state’s economic output and a stunning 96 percent of its employment growth. [<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/01/22/uneven-growth/>] Medium-sized metros in Illinois saw their economic output actually decline during this six-year period by almost two percent, with their employment growing by little more than one percent. Among mid-sized metros, Springfield’s numbers were only slightly better than average.



Long accustomed to the stability provided by the presence of state government and, more recently, a medical complex serving the larger region, Springfield has been a study in economic incrementalism, neither declining nor gaining much over time. That steadiness has occurred during a history in which the area population has always increased more or less. Between 1840 and 2010, neither Springfield nor Sangamon County where it is located ever saw a decade-to-decade decline in population. However, since 2015, the area has been losing population. If that pattern continues through the decennial census in 2020, it will mark the first time in the Capital City’s history when it has shown a loss of people. No corner of the local economy is immune to the adverse effects created by sustained population declines.

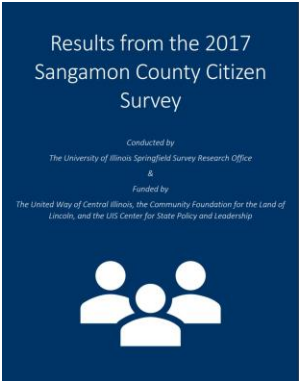


In an effort to infuse more dynamism into the local economy, the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln established Innovate Springfield in 2016, a business and social innovation incubator. [<https://www.innovatespringfield.org/>] The organization opened its doors in 2017 and has attracted, as of this writing, 44 members, including 26 who have been developing new businesses. Members have generated a total of \$1.6 million in revenue.

The social innovation thrust of Innovate Springfield has been guided by Sangamon Success, a local initiative the Center for State Policy and Leadership helped design in 2015 to improve educational outcomes for less advantaged children in the community. The Center has also been renting an office at Innovate, shared with UIS’ Center for Entrepreneurship and Family Business. [<https://www.continuumoflearning.org/sangamon-success/>] Sangamon Success has been instrumental in bringing to Springfield the highly regarded Nurse-Family Partnership, a research-based home visiting program for first-time, low-income parents. The program is operated by the SIU School of Medicine’s community health center. Sangamon Success has also spurred the development of improvements in local mentoring programs for at-risk children and preschool efforts to screen young children for developmental needs. The combination of business incubation and targeted social innovation through Sangamon Success is intended to address one of the key drivers of economic and community development: human capital.

Innovate Springfield has emerged at a time of uncertainty in the community about the direction for its continuing development. Since 2013, the Center’s





Survey Research Office, with support from the Community Foundation and the United Way of Central Illinois, has conducted a citizen survey to find out what local people think about key issues. [<https://www.uis.edu/surveyresearchoffice/projects/#scs>] The most recent survey, in the spring of 2017, showed that people were divided on the question of the need for population growth: 38 percent said they wanted to see a faster rate of growth, but 63 percent expressed a preference for either no growth, the current rate of growth, or a slower rate. A large majority favored growing downtown Springfield, and a small majority said the block next to the Governor’s mansion, a prime piece of open real estate owned by the city, should be used to create jobs rather than for recreation.

The survey showed that citizen perceptions of local business conditions have soured, with 46 percent saying conditions have gotten worse compared to 20 percent who said this in 2015 and 30 percent in 2013. Local employers seem to be not quite as pessimistic. When the Survey Office asked employers in its fall 2017 biannual economic outlook survey about their expectations for the overall local economy during the next year, a third said they expected improvement and another third expected things to stay the same.

[<https://www.uis.edu/surveyresearchoffice/wp-content/uploads/sites/162/2014/09/Fall-2017-Economic-Outlook-Report.pdf>]

The citizen survey indicated that Springfield does have something going for it that may be a precondition for an improving economy. The survey asked respondents whether most people can or can’t be trusted. Forty-three percent said that most people can be trusted. In the most recent iteration of this question in the General Social Survey (GSS) administered by the National Opinion Research Center, 33 percent of the national sample chose the trust option. In 1972, the first year the GSS posed the trust question, 48 percent of the national sample picked this option. More trust has been shown to foster economic growth and development, as people relate more easily with one another and information flows more freely.

[<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f7e3/e958b4b7387707a5ae32fa34a6a7565e1de1.pdf>]



Next Generations



In a modern complex society, the development of children is not as straightforward as it used to be, or at least as it used to seem. Enabling children to acquire the skills and attitudes for a productive, meaningful life has become ever more intentional and varied. Children not only need to learn how to read, write, and compute; they also are expected now to become skilled at managing their emotions and relating in healthy ways to others. The latter has always been part of child development, but for the most part in the past it just happened. Specific programs were not deemed necessary to cultivate good behavior. The ubiquitous presence of electronic devices in children’s lives has replaced daydreaming as a



source of distraction and has even become a risk to safety. At the college level, protecting students against threats, real or perceived, has spawned new policies, programs, and uncertainties. And liberal learning, long the center of gravity of undergraduate education, is now under attack from the proponents of vocational training (i.e., preparing people for specific types of jobs needed by the economy), fostering confusion about the purpose of a college education. The point of this litany – which could be much longer – is not that any of it is good or bad. Rather, the point is that it represents more complexity for us to navigate.

Prioritizing the Less Advantaged

If the world is getting more complex, then there is a good case to be made for directing special attention to children who grow up with no, few, or fewer than average advantages. There has long been a sound moral argument for creating opportunity for children who, through no fault of their own, face social and economic limitations. But, in addition, tapping the full potential of less advantaged children and youth is necessary to the future well-being of American society and culture, since this group, and retirees, are the only parts of the population that are growing.

Generally, our strategy in the United States for helping less advantaged children over the past half century has been “to let 1000 flowers bloom.” Countless programs and services have been invented, usually with the best of intentions, but rarely with convincing evidence of effectiveness. Most interventions, when studied carefully, have not been found to work. This should not surprise us, since failure, rather than success, is the more likely outcome when testing new possibilities of any kind. For example, according to Straight Talk on Evidence, a program of the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, of thousands of tests of new products and strategies by Google and Microsoft, “80 to 90 percent have reportedly found no significant effects.”

[<http://www.straighttalkonevidence.org/2018/03/21/how-to-solve-u-s-social-problems-when-most-rigorous-program-evaluations-find-disappointing-effects-part-one-in-a-series/>] It stands to reason that in an increasingly complex world, with so many variables at play, the path to effectiveness eludes easy detection.



Though most interventions to help the less advantaged come up short, there are exceptions. Sangamon Success, referenced earlier, is a local effort influenced by the Center to foster the use of effective, well-tested services and programs for children facing difficult odds. The idea is to populate the “continuum of learning” from pregnancy through entry into post-secondary education with what has been shown to work. Such an effort cannot be done on the cheap – a couple of million dollars has already been leveraged locally for Sangamon Success to get things headed in the right

direction. But, it should more than pay for itself in time, so long as the community can remain committed to doing what actually works. [<https://www.continuumoflearning.org/sangamon-success/>]

Doing what works was also the focus in 2017 of [Building Our Children’s Futures: A Multi-Disciplinary Conference to Address and Confront Poverty](#). This was a regional conference on child poverty organized by the Center. Under the leadership of the Center’s Lorena Johnson, the conference brought together practitioners with scholars to learn more about the science underlying the array of social challenges associated with child poverty. There was also a strong focus on the latest research on effective interventions, with a special closing session devoted to helping participants plan how to use what they learned.





Sometimes, doing what works for the less advantaged is not a function of how good a program or model is but of the organization that operates it. In 2017, Innovate Springfield, under the auspices of Sangamon Success, experimented successfully with a novel approach to help local service organizations build their capacity to be more effective and help more children. A team of local experts, including the Center’s David Racine, volunteered over several months to provide analysis and advice to Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Illinois Capital Region on how to strengthen its core capabilities. Rather than leaving the fate of local service providers to the “market,” it can sometimes make sense to shore up ones that represent important pieces of the community’s social infrastructure.

Another activity to bolster local capacity to enable less advantaged children to succeed has been the Springfield MOSAIC project, a multi-stakeholder initiative operated by Memorial Behavioral Health. [<https://www.memorialbehavioralhealth.org/Childrens-Mosaic-Project>] The purpose of MOSAIC is to help children with social-emotional challenges access behavioral healthcare. Funded mainly by the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation, MOSAIC has been systematically screening children from birth through high school for behavioral health issues and connecting them with appropriate therapy and other services. The Center’s Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies and Survey Research Office have conducted annual evaluations of the effort. The most recent evaluation in 2017 (https://www.uis.edu/illaps/wp-content/uploads/sites/173/2015/07/springfield-mosaic-local-evaluation-report-2017_4.pdf) found that MOSAIC has been effectively integrated into primary care practices in the community and has made progress along similar lines in public schools. MOSAIC has given indications of being more effective with younger children but less effective with teenagers, compared to the usual ways in which children in the community access mental health services.



When it comes to raising children, a prime example of complexity is realizing that health problems are often caused by social ones. This has long been assumed as conventional wisdom, but in recent years more robust evidence has poured in from science to validate the connection. In 2015, the Center joined with the SIU School of Medicine and other local organizations and committed individuals to form the Community Health Round Table for the purpose of shining a light on the social determinants of health problems in

the community. The group’s initial focus has been the role that housing conditions play in the incidence of childhood asthma and leading poisoning, serious problems with lifelong consequences and costs to society. After intensive work, especially during 2017, the Round Table recently released its report, Better Housing for Healthier Children. [<http://www.sj-r.com/news/20180314/community-health-roundtable-highlights-high-asthma-lead-levels>]



The Protection of Children

In public service, few circumstances are fraught with more complexity than protecting children from maltreatment. It's not just the complex legal and social issues involved. It's also the emotional complexity of intervening in the life of families when they seem to be failing in their most important and intimate responsibility, caring for their children. This function is performed by child protection investigators, who take real risks to make sure children are safe.

In 2015, under the leadership of Dr. Betsy Goulet in the Institute, the university was given a contract by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to redesign the state agency's training of child protection investigators. For nearly the entire existence of DCFS, the training had been oriented to classroom lecture and discussion, with a heavy emphasis on agency policies and procedures. Goulet had been inspired by innovative efforts occurring in a small number of places elsewhere in the United States to propose using real-life simulation to teach investigators how to conduct investigations, present testimony in court, and so on. Research has shown that simulation, in which learning occurs through action that mimics actual practice, helps people to learn more and retain what they learn.



After a year of design work, in 2016 the Institute entered into another contract with DCFS to test the new training with new investigators through the Center's recently established Child Protection Training Academy.

<https://www.uis.edu/cspl/child-protection-training-academy/> An old house on the UIS campus was converted into a realistic version of the kind of home investigators might visit when conducting an investigation. A mock courtroom was established in another location on campus. Actors were hired to play roles as parents, judges and lawyers to create scenes that investigators might typically encounter. The test year went well, and for 2017-2018, DCFS provided another contract to expand the training and begin developing content for the supervisors of investigators.



As of this writing, 398 investigators from every part of the state have gone through the training. Nearly all participants rated the training positively in a 2017 preliminary evaluation of the program by the Children & Family Research Center at

the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Many expressed a desire for more simulated experiences on other topics. One training participant seemed to speak for others when she said: "It exceeded all of my expectations.... from the moment that I look at the facility.... interacting with the actors and doing all that, it's so very real... It absolutely felt real from the moment I knocked on that door to the moment I was leaving."

Schooling in the Time of Choice

Surveys routinely find that people like the schools in their community. In the 2017 Sangamon County Citizen Survey, 81 percent of respondents rated their child's education as excellent or good. Sixty-six percent of people said Springfield is a good place to raise children, which could be interpreted as a favorable vote on the quality of local schools. By contrast, only 41 percent said Springfield was a good place to retire.

Though we like our own schools, we may be less sure than we used to be about the purpose and operation of schools. In a recent study by the Brookings Institution in Washington DC, parents of school-age children



were asked what the most important goal should be of their child’s school, and a broader group of adults was asked the same question about schools in their community or around the United States. They were given three goals: preparing students for careers “that are best for them personally,” preparing them for careers “that are best for the economy,” and preparing them to be “engaged, ethical members of their communities.” The researchers expected parents to emphasize personally best careers, with the broader public favoring societal goals, but there was little difference between the groups. The choice receiving the strongest response from both groups was being an engaged and ethical community member, with personally best careers coming in second. Pursuing careers best for the economy was a distant third. [<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2018/02/20/comparing-what-parents-and-the-public-and-democrats-and-republicans-want-from-schools/>]

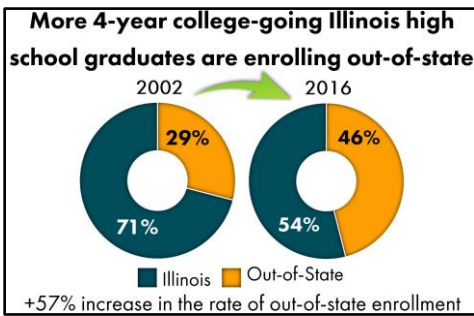


Over the past several decades, schools have become more complex undertakings as society has expected them to take on more responsibilities, and with complexity comes more cost. In Illinois, this meant a distinct advantage for wealthier school districts, given the state’s heavy dependence on property taxes to pay school bills. “Decades of reliance on property taxes,” wrote NPR education reporter Dusty Rhodes in September 2017, “has left hundreds of property-poor school districts scrounging just to cover basic operations, let alone frills like art, music, and advanced placement classes.” The purpose of Rhodes’ story was to shine a spotlight on State Senator Andy

Manar of Bunker Hill, the legislator most responsible for getting the Illinois General Assembly last year to finally pass legislation to make Illinois’ state funding of schools more ample and equitable. [<http://nprillinois.org/post/illinois-issues-manar-education-reform-mission#stream/0>] The bill itself reflected just how complex solving problems like this have become, as it relies, in part, on a complicated formula called the “evidence-based model.” The model allocates funds based on a number of factors derived from research.



Location, Location, Location



As elementary and secondary schools ended 2017 seeing light at the end of the financial tunnel, colleges and universities continued to fret about their future. To be sure, the passage of a state budget saw state funding flowing once again into public institutions after a nearly two-year gap. But, the fact that 2018 could once again bring budget stalemate kept colleges and universities on edge. It did not help matters that an old story gained new momentum: the continuing loss of Illinois high school graduates to out-of-state schools.

“Only New Jersey loses more college students than Illinois,” explained Dusty Rhodes for NPR Illinois in September, “and that’s according to counts taken before Illinois starved its universities during the two-year budget impasse.”

[<http://nprillinois.org/post/roses-higher-ed-plan-faces-thorny-battle#stream/0>]

Rhodes was writing about legislation introduced by Sen. Chapin Rose of Mahomet to guarantee admission to an Illinois public university for any Illinois high school student who graduates with decent grades and to allocate state funding based on what different universities are best at. Both provisions are controversial, but the second calls for breaking with the tradition of providing access to a comprehensive range of educational options in every region of the state.

Having institutions become more specialized emerges at a time of growing evidence of the importance of geographic accessibility in determining college going. “First-generation and low-income college students,” wrote Emily Deruy for *The Atlantic* in February 2016, “are disproportionately likely to attend schools close to home.”

[<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/02/where-we-put-schools-matters-most/460068/>] She also pointed out that “increasing numbers of college students are also parents and breadwinners....with community ties and



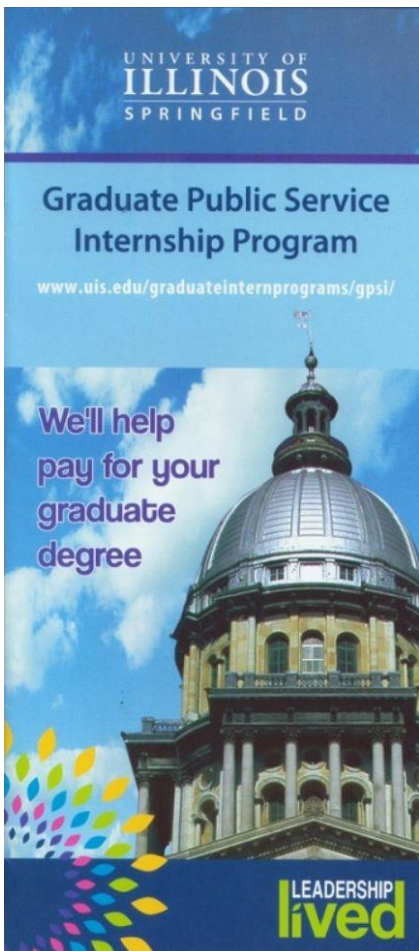
jobs that are difficult to uproot.” According to research, most first-year students go to schools within 50 miles of where they live. Six to twelve percent of adults in the United States live in areas considered “educational deserts,” defined as places with no nearby colleges or universities and with only one community college.

[<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Education-Deserts-The-Continued-Significance-of-Place-in-the-Twenty-First-Century.pdf>]. Most educational deserts are in the Midwest and Great Plains states. At a time in which choices are growing in so many dimensions of life where they don't really matter (bathroom towel racks), the narrowing of higher learning options, which do really matter, seems questionable.



Drawing of new UIS Student Union

A Bright Spot for Public Service



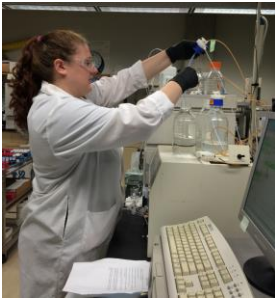
In another twenty years, there will be almost no members of the Baby Boom generation – those born between 1946 and 1964 – left in the American workforce. Except for some people who will ride the advantages of incumbency to hold onto their legislative seats and judgeships late in life, every leader in public service in Illinois and elsewhere will be from a younger generation. The lock the Baby Boom has had on political power the past thirty years will be over.

While there is more continuity across generations than typically assumed, it is true that each generation bears distinguishing marks. For example, Generation X (1965-1979) and especially Millennials (1980-1999) are more tech-savvy and can be expected to make technology a more central part of how they work and live their lives. This is evident among graduate students participating in the Center's Graduate Public Service Internship (GPSI) program. In exit surveys, interns note how the state agencies where they intern, populated by high number of Baby Boomers, often turn to them for help with matters involving the use of computers or the development and maintenance of websites and databases.

GPSI is a special case of the university seeking to prepare young adults for leadership in public service, something the Center is uniquely positioned to do given its location in the state capital. The program is the epitome of win-win. State agencies benefit from the talent of paid half-time interns (full-time in the summer) over the two years it takes them to use the other half of their time to complete a master's degree at UIS. Most of the cost is picked up by the agencies, which is a boon to the students and the university. In 2017, the Center's GPSI office placed 226 graduate students in internships under the supervision of 162 supervisors in 20 state agencies. Interns came from nearly every one of UIS' graduate programs.

It can be expected that across 226 placements, experiences will vary. However, the norm is one in which interns get to do real work advancing the public interest in the specific ways common to each state agency. “During my time at the Illinois Department of Public Health Division of Food, Drugs, and Dairies, “wrote intern Dan Bitner recently, “I have accomplished





a number of important tasks. The first was creation of a quick reference guide for the FDA Food Code for use by inspectors in the field....I have accompanied dairy inspectors on over 50 dairy farm and plant inspections...and have taken over 75 online training modules on food safety offered by the FDA.” The development and use of technical know-how is characteristic of many internships, given the complex challenges that state agencies are expected to manage. Intern Lauren Aiello’s experience at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is typical. “This past summer I analyzed harmful algal bloom samples from water bodies throughout the state,” she said. “I produced data that played a large role in reducing the public’s exposure to environmental health risks. I am now certified in total colisure and fecal coliform analysis.”

Liberal Justice

Liberal justice is justice that emphasizes protecting and enhancing individual freedoms. The noun form, liberalism, is today associated with Democrats and the political left. However, back at the time of the American Founding, liberalism was the theory that best described and informed the new constitutional order being brought into existence. The English thinker and writer John Locke, sometimes said to be the Father of Liberalism, is generally credited with providing the main philosophical inspiration for the Founders. Western Europe and America were then emerging from more autocratic forms of government (thus the reason the colonies revolted) in which the individual had been a subject rather than a citizen with rights.



Hence, it has always been somewhat odd that the credo which gave birth to the United States has, through the blurry passage of time, come to be associated with only one particular strand of the American political scheme. Yes, there are libertarians on the right who favor a more maximal definition of freedom. But, it can’t be of much help to the ordinary citizen, who spends little to no time reading up on political theory, to have two seemingly distinct belief systems that derive from the same root, a root which still defines the essence of the American experiment in which we all presumably share. At a time when autocratic rule is reasserting itself in various places around the world, reminding ourselves that we are an experiment in freedom seems like something worth doing, maybe even necessary.

Doing so also reminds us that protecting and enhancing liberty is hard, complex work. It doesn’t happen without trying. Differences arise over what that trying should look like or what it’s limits should be. But, there really can’t be any intellectually defensible argument against the pursuit. Because the Center for State Policy and Leadership is, by design, embedded in public life, rather than detached from it, it has for the duration of its existence always had a stake in the cause of liberal justice, properly defined.

Innocence for the Innocent

In 2001, faculty and staff in the Center established the Downstate Illinois Innocence Project. Not the first project of its kind, the effort was part of a growing, concerted movement, for the first time in American history, to correct the mistakes of the justice system case by case. The introduction of DNA testing in the early 1990s provided a new, powerful tool for mustering evidence to establish innocence.





The Downstate Illinois Innocence Project was initially a small operation with no full-time employees. Now called the Illinois Innocence Project, the initiative has expanded dramatically since 2010, with three full-time attorneys, including one based in Chicago, several other staff, and a veritable army of undergraduate students who play a critical role in reviewing the hundreds of cases of Illinois inmates who apply to the Project for help every year. At any one time, the Project is representing twenty to thirty active cases of inmates with a credible claim to innocence.

Exonerations tend not to come easily, but when they do come, they often break new ground. In 2017, the Project got a murder by arson case overturned on the grounds that the “expert” testimony used to convict William Amor 22 years ago was flawed and unreliable. This is believed to be the first case in Illinois to label traditional arson testimony, which has put many a person in prison, junk science. The Project first began working on Amor’s case in 2011. In the intervening years, the numerous UIS students who participated in the case got a unique, up-close view of forensic science and its limits in resolving questions of innocence or guilt, a lesson hard to accomplish in the classroom.



Information provided by the Illinois Innocence Project also helped spur legislative successes in 2017. A bill that would bar the use of unreliable jailhouse informant testimony passed both the State Senate and the relevant committee in the House, with full House action anticipated in early 2018. Legislation was also drafted to prompt payment of judgments from the Illinois Court of Claims to 22 Illinois exonerees. Owing to the awareness raised by the bill, the 22 exonerees finally received payment last summer.

Late in 2017, the Project received word that it had won its fourth DNA testing grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. The Project received its first DNA testing grant in 2011, which enabled it to bring on the staff appellate defense attorney



Gwen Jordan, legal studies professor at UIS and a staff attorney with the Illinois Innocence Project, teaches a class on wrongful convictions and how to prevent them, at the Police Training Institute of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

John Hanlon. Hanlon has since become the Project’s executive director and has had the lead responsibility for building its capacity during the past seven years. DNA testing funding allows the Project to take on cases in which convictions were obtained through eyewitness misidentification or false confession. These are common causes of wrongful convictions and can be refuted with DNA evidence that rules out the convicted person as the perpetrator. To date, DNA testing funding from the federal government has helped the Project obtain five exonerations.

Hard Truths

The Illinois Innocence Project, and others like it, are testimony to the reality that justice, when viewed with clear eyes, is not as certain and simple as we may have once thought or been led to believe. Eyewitnesses can be mistaken. Innocent people can be coerced into confessing after hours of interrogation. Forensic science is hardly as dispositive as television

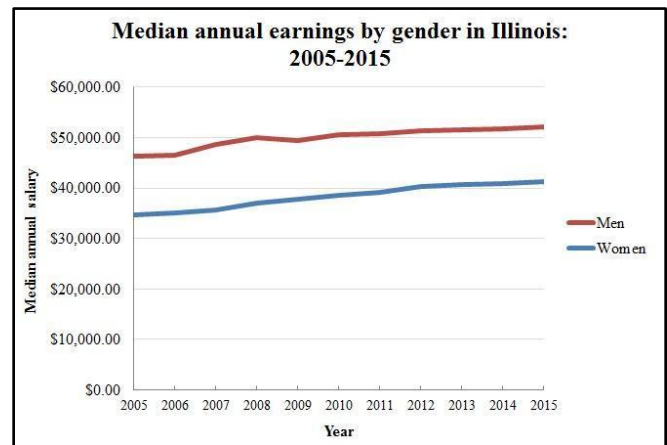


crime shows suggest. These demonstrable features of the human condition all add complexity to the pursuit of truth in criminal cases.

That people segregate from one another and can take a dim view of others not like themselves is also a hard truth. It grates against our mythology of being free and equal, since segregation and otherness always entail diminution of those who are not us. An extreme form of otherness has appeared in recent years, in which people have even become alienated from their neighbors. In 2014, the General Social Survey found that less than half of Americans said they spend social evenings with their neighbors at least once a month. This compared with nearly two-thirds of people who reported spending time with their neighbors monthly in 1974, forty years earlier.

Loss of trust in one’s neighbors is more pronounced among blacks and Hispanics than among whites even when both groups are affluent. The fact that affluent black and Hispanic people are more likely to live in segregated poorer’ neighborhoods with higher rates of crime may have something to do with it. Despite the image of the South as the most racially divided, the Midwest has the unfortunate distinction of being the most segregated region in the country. “The sharpest black-white racial divides and most intense segregation...,” wrote John Austin in a September 2017 article for The Brookings Institution, “can be found in the old industrial city-regions of the Midwest.” As of 2010, the Milwaukee area in Wisconsin was the most segregated urban area in the country. Chicago was third, and St. Louis was seventh. Things are not much different outside of Chicago in Illinois. “Across the state we find that the vast majority of communities are segregated at moderate to high levels,” reported University of Illinois Chicago sociologist in an analysis for the Institute of Government and Public Affairs in 2009.

Race, as well as gender, sexual orientation, and religion, remain the dominant touchstones in our society for the pursuit of justice and quality. In a series of stories in 2017, NPR Illinois reporter Daisy Contreras zeroed in on the problem of the gender wage gap in Illinois. “Women working in year-round, full-time jobs,” said Contreras, “make an average of 80 cents for every dollar that men make in the same circumstances.” The disparity is even greater when race enters the picture, with black women getting 63 cents and Latina women 48 cents. While certain factors, like differences in experience and unionization explain a large part of the gap, noted Contreras, nearly 40 percent is unaccounted for, suggesting that discrimination may be at work.



Hate crimes are the most extreme, transparent form of discrimination. Political polarization and new-found energy among far-right groups committed to white dominance have appeared to fuel an uptick in bias crimes since 2016 Presidential election. The Southern Poverty Law Center, reported Maureen Foertsch McKinney for NPR Illinois in June 2017, identified 56 hate incidents in Illinois between November 2016 and end of March 2017. One of these involved four people who streamed live on the Internet their multi-hour attack on a disabled teenager. The problem did not go unnoticed by state policymakers. Illinois passed two bills in 2017, reported NPR Illinois’ Rachel Otwell. One adds to the list of crimes that can be classed as hateful, focusing particularly on new crimes made possible by communication technology (e.g., cyber-stalking). The other “removes a cap on restitution for hate crimes that take place in or cause damage to a place of worship.”



In 2017, Illinois also began improvements in an area in which racial minorities have been disproportionately affected, namely, school discipline. The state passed a law in 2016 that forces schools to abandon their policies of zero tolerance for bad behavior and make more use of what is called restorative justice that seeks to repair harm rather than discipline the offender. NPR Illinois education reporter Dusty Rhodes went back to several schools she visited prior to the passage of the new law to see what progress they have made. Across the entire state, the Illinois State Board of Education found a 28 percent decrease in expulsions and a 21 percent decrease in out-of-school suspensions compared to the year before. Rhodes found similar improvements among the schools she had visited in Batavia, Rogers Park in Chicago, Champaign, the Noble Charter School Network, and Springfield.

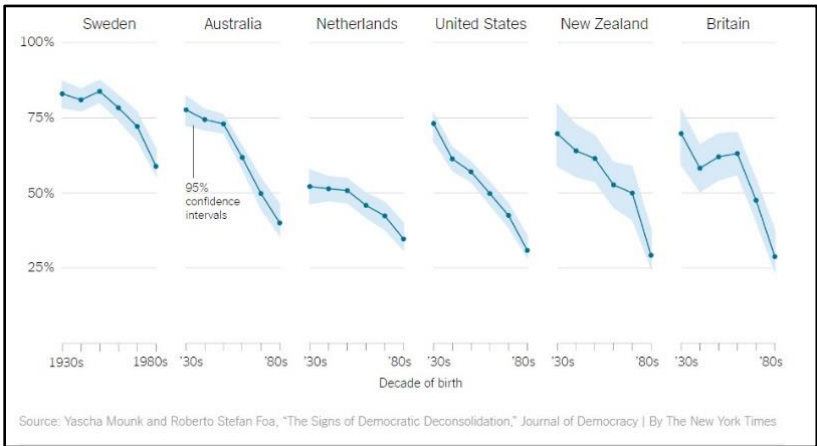


Age of Re-enlightenment

Historians of the West consider the 18th century the beginning of the age of enlightenment. Throwing off the blindness of the Dark Ages and the ecclesiastical heavy-hand of the Medieval period, people became increasingly attached to the authority of human reason. The scientific revolution, though starting earlier, gained tremendous momentum during the 1700s. The enlightenment also gave us constitutional democracy, the idea that with properly designed political institutions people could govern themselves through free and fair elections. The United States has been the most prominent example of a constitutional democracy, having ruled itself this way for nearly a quarter of a millennium.

Lately, though, confidence in American democracy has seemed to waver. Trust in government, particularly at the national level, has plummeted during the past couple of decades. A Pew Research survey in spring 2017 found that 51 percent of Americans were not satisfied “with the way democracy is working” in the United States.

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2017/10/16/globally-broad-support-for-representative-and-direct-democracy/>] In the same survey, 22 percent said it would be good to be ruled by a strong leader without interference from the other two branches of government, and 17 percent said a system in which the military ruled would be a good way to govern. Autocracy and military rule were more strongly favored by those with less education and who lean right politically.



More striking still is the evidence of weakening of support for democracy among younger generations in the United States. In an analysis of responses to the World Value Surveys between 1995 and 2014, Roberto Foa and Yascha Mounk found that while 72 percent of Americans born before World War II said it was essential to live in a democracy, only 30 percent of millennials took this position.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/623602>] Millennials were 24 percentage points less likely than older Americans (19 percent vs. 43 percent) to believe that it would be illegitimate in a democracy for

the military to take over if the government is incompetent or failing to do its job. Among rich young Americans the discrepancy was even more pronounced, with 35 percent saying it would be a good thing for the army to take over; that contrasts with only 6 percent of rich young Americans taking this position in 1995.



The age of enlightenment celebrated human reason. If the current period of confusion and complexity has made anything clear it's that reason is not infallible. Indeed, science itself has shown how we fall short of rationality much more often and in many more ways than we are wont to believe. Millennials are the first adult generation to be born into this age of doubt. It's not surprising that, at the moment, they may be less committed to democracy than preceding generations. But, doubt is often the wellspring of new possibilities – of, in this case, finding new ways to make democracy effective, as some experiences of the Center in 2017 attest.



Governing with Truth

Governing has become more complex because of the growing range of issues brought to the attention of political officials to solve. Neither side of the political continuum is immune to adding to the list of public responsibilities; they just have different preferences, partly, at least, because they are supported by different interests. Since the economy generates the revenue on which government depends, economic weakness or decline challenge the capacity of public officials to act efficiently and effectively.



Although Illinois has recovered some since the Great Recession in 2008-2009, there is good reason to think that going almost three years without a budget kept the state from progressing as much as it might have under more concerted political leadership. A recent study by economists Scott Baker, Nicholas Bloom, and Steven Davis showed that in the United States policy uncertainty has foreshadowed “declines in investment, output, and employment” for more than a century.

[<http://www.policyuncertainty.com/media/BakerBloomDavis.pdf>] When economic actors – and we all fall into that category, whether as producers, workers, or consumers – do not know what government is going to do, they become more cautious and risk averse.

In 2017, a positive step toward relieving the uncertainty in Illinois was taken when enough Republicans in the legislature broke ranks with Governor Rauner last summer to make it possible, along with the Democratic majority, to get a budget enacted. However, the result is only good for a year and makes only a small dent in the state's overall fiscal distress. Writing for NPR Illinois in October, reporter Daisy Contreras noted that “Today Illinois stands neck-and-neck with New Jersey as they compete for worst fiscal conditions in the country.” [<http://nprillinois.org/post/illinois-issues-land-lincoln-new-jersey-compete-worst-fiscal-condition#stream/0>] Massive unfunded pension liabilities and billions of dollars in unpaid bills that piled up the past few years tempered whatever enthusiasm arose from resolution of the budget impasse.

While breaking the impasse has not gotten Illinois out of the fiscal woods, how it came to be is instructive on how the state may be able to mitigate more political brinksmanship down the road. The Governor threw down the gauntlet with his first budget proposal in 2015, which called for steep cuts in state spending, particularly in social services and higher education. Accustomed to being threatened with the budget axe, social services' interests mobilized quickly and kept up the drumbeat of concern throughout the standoff. But, since they represent constituencies with relatively little political power, they were unable to get much traction on their own. Meanwhile, though public higher education was subject in the initial budget proposal to an even steeper cuts, colleges and universities were slow to mobilize and preferred to follow their usual path of working behind the scenes. However, as the impasse persisted and the existential threat intensified, higher education institutions started to apply more direct pressure on their members in the legislature.



What finally broke the standoff was the willingness of Republican members from districts with colleges and universities to defy the Governor and side with their local constituencies.

When political conflicts are large and crosscutting like this one, affected interests face the choice of either each trying to cut their own deal or finding common cause with others similarly affected. The usual pattern of self-dealing certainly occurred during the two-year run-up to the budget agreement. Yet, in the end, common cause prevailed. Interests and elected officials showed they were capable of working together for the public interest. While hardly an outstanding example of democracy in action, it was nevertheless an encouraging step and may be a harbinger of better things to come. The taste of victory can sometime produce new habits.

Meanwhile, Governor Rauner continued to pay a price for intransigence. “The Illinois House dealt a series of rebukes to Gov. Bruce Rauner,” wrote NPR Illinois’ Brian Mackey in late October, “as Republicans joined Democrats to override nearly a dozen of the governor’s vetoes.”

[\[http://nprillinois.org/post/house-rolls-over-vetoes-while-rauner-claims-big-win\]](http://nprillinois.org/post/house-rolls-over-vetoes-while-rauner-claims-big-win) The weakening of the Governor created an opening for a serious challenge to his bid for a second term, as conservative Republican Jeanne Ives opted to run against him for the nomination. In December, National Review, a conservative weekly, labeled Rauner the “worst republican governor in America.”

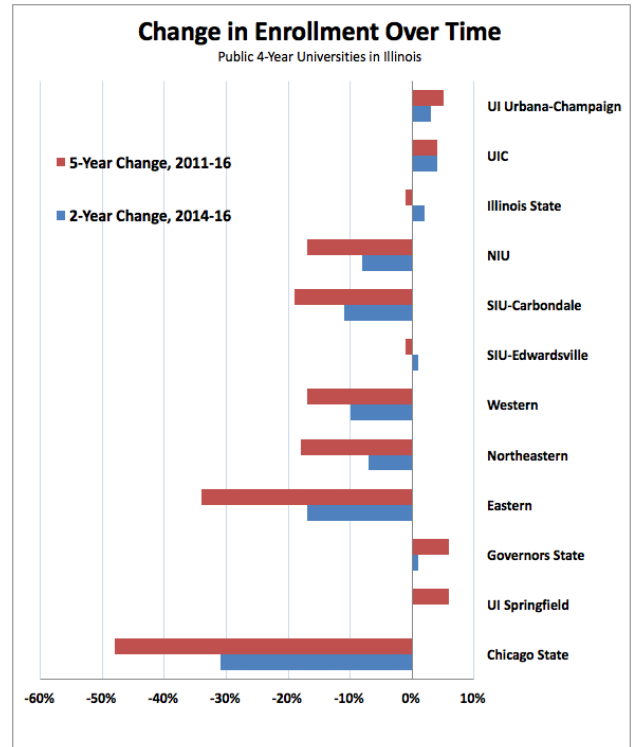
[\[https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2017/12/18/bruce-rauner-illinois-worst-republican-governor-america/\]](https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2017/12/18/bruce-rauner-illinois-worst-republican-governor-america/) In January 2018, Rauner also grabbed the bottom spot in polling firm Morning Consult’s quarterly ranking of the nation’s governors, with 55 percent disapproval. [\[https://morningconsult.com/2018/02/01/governor-rankings-jan-2018/\]](https://morningconsult.com/2018/02/01/governor-rankings-jan-2018/)

There is a prominent strand in the business literature that advises executives to pick their goal and let nothing deter them from pursuing it until successful. This may work in the world of commerce and entrepreneurship, at least part of the time. But, it is a questionable strategy for success in politics. Under democratic conditions of dispersed power, political effectiveness typically comes from bending and weaving and adapting, with an understanding that the final goal achieved is not likely to be just one’s own.

Making Budgets Intelligible

A state budget is a policy document. It shows what the state has committed to do to solve the problems of its people. That reality should make each annual budget of interest to citizens. And yet, most people do not appear to know what’s in the state budget and seem to show little interest beyond complaining about the taxes they will have to pay to fund it.

A significant part of the reason for this is the esoteric nature of state budgeting and financing, dry disciplines that do not naturally elicit excitement. While nothing may ever make these disciplines worthy of a prime-time television drama, some states do better than others in trying to bridge the gap between the budget and public understanding of it. The Center has been involved in two important initiatives along this line.





A team of Institute researchers – public administration professor Beverly Bunch, economics professor Patricia Byrnes, and doctoral student Ann Schneider – have been working with The Volcker Alliance on “The Truth and Integrity in Government Financial Project.” Research teams at universities across the country have been collecting data on state budgeting from each state. The data is providing the Alliance with the basis for evaluating the clarity and integrity of state budgeting and financial reporting. “Understanding state budgets and financial reporting is challenging even for those of us who teach and study these issues,” explained Dr. Bunch. The Alliance, a nonpartisan group, was established in 2013 by Paul Volcker to address the challenge of the effective execution of public policies and to help rebuild public trust in government, longtime concerns of the former Federal Reserve Board chair.

The Alliance issued its first report in 2017, describing best practices, as well as weaknesses in state budget approaches. [<https://www.volckeralliance.org/publications/truth-and-integrity-state-budgeting-what-is-the-reality>]. Each state received a report card with grades in five categories: budget forecasting, budget maneuvers, legacy costs (e.g., funding pensions), accruing and overseeing reserve funds, and disclosing financial information to the public. Overall, Illinois was near the bottom of the rankings, with Ds in forecasting, maneuvers, and legacy costs, a C in use of reserves, and a B in transparency. Time will tell whether the embarrassment of a low public ranking will spur Illinois’ political leadership to make improvements.



In an effort to draw the people of the state more directly into the budgeting process, NPR Illinois teamed up with the Illinois chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons to host 11 budget forums in different parts of the state between April and November 2017. [<http://nprillinois.org/programs/past-due#stream/0>] At each forum, a small group of panelists provided perspective on the budget, and then members of the public were invited to weigh in with their own experiences and views. NPR Illinois livestreamed each forum on You Tube, with archived video available at

nprillinos.org after each event. A total of 10 public radio stations participated, and the forums drew more than 850 participants and 44 panelists. Comments at the forums revealed the public’s anxiety about conditions in the state. One person’s remark at the forum in the Quad Cities pretty well summed up the general mood: “I am one of the parents of young children who is ready to flee the state out of fear for the education system that my child may enter, because I don’t know what that infrastructure will look like in five years.”



Money, Money, Money

In the Center’s annual report for 2015, we wrote about the political influence of economic elites, citing a well-designed 2014 study which showed that the wealthy were much more likely than average citizens to prevail in public policymaking. Since then, billionaire Donald Trump has been elected to the American Presidency on a populist, man-of-the-people platform, even though he is an almost archetypical elite who has used his wealth to exert political influence. Both as candidate and Governor, Bruce Rauner has sought to portray himself as more like the average citizen dressing in blue jeans and flannel shirts than the private equity multimillionaire he actually is. Despite the down-home imagery, Rauner, too, has used his wealth for political purposes, leveraging it to try to control the Illinois Republican Party.





The last time wealth so dominated the political landscape was the Gilded Age that formed after the Civil War. Then, the rich did not, for the most part, seek office. Rather, they used their money and connections to exert influence behind the scenes in behalf of their own interests. Working behind the scenes has long seemed to work well for the well-to-do. So, it is something of an anomaly now that people who have been successful acquiring wealth are willing to subject themselves to the ballot box. One has to go back to the founding for the last time the rich were so willing to run for high office. Then, the motive was to defeat British tyranny and establish the new nation. Today, the motives seem less clear and noble, having something to do with feelings of uncertainty about the direction of state and country. The times are more complex; so, perhaps vague and mixed purposes are to be expected.

As political matters go, Illinois was the epitome of irony in 2017. As the state vied for the dishonor of having the worse fiscal situation in the country, wealthy Bruce Rauner filed his candidacy for a chance at a second term as governor, while Hyatt Hotels heir billionaire J.B. Pritzker emerged as the front-runner for the democratic gubernatorial nomination. The race was portending to be the most expensive governor's contest in the country ever, fueling the usual despair about the role of money in modern politics. "We have to decide are we having an election or are we having an auction," decried state Senator and middle-class gubernatorial candidate Daniel Biss. [<http://nprillinois.org/post/key-question-democrats-billionaire-or-not-billionaire#stream/0>]

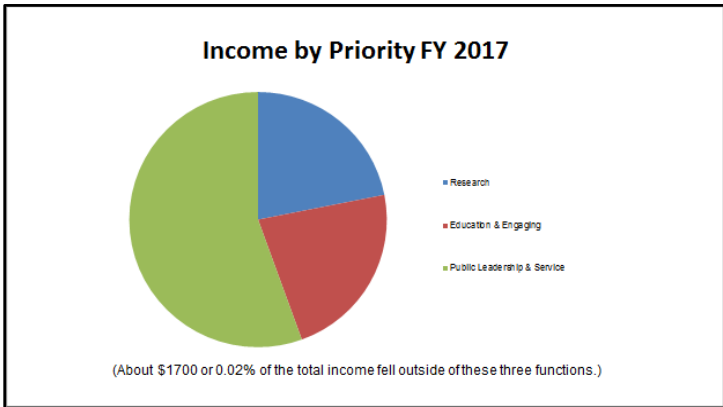
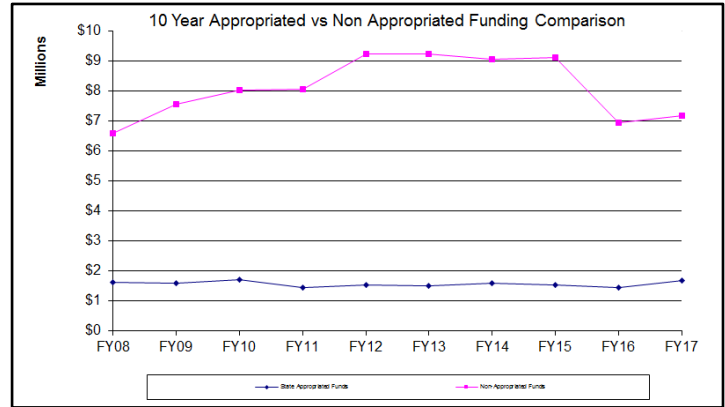


Biss' complaint is understandable but rests on the shaky assumption that rich people are running for office because they can afford the cost. That would be true if either the wealthy were the only ones running or were increasingly more likely than the non-wealthy in general to take the electoral plunge, but they aren't. Alternatively, the experience of the Gilded Age and recent political science research might lead us to believe that the well-heeled seek political office to protect the interests of their class. Surely, the research is not all wrong, and there is something to be said for the role of self-interest in motivating the desire for political power. But that cannot fully explain the phenomenon of Donald Trump, who has acted both for and against his class interests, or J.B. Pritzker, who is running as a liberal Democrat.

No, at bottom it seems the dominant reason the wealthy are contending for office is because they believe in themselves. The growing complexity of things makes the way to political success increasingly less obvious, if one's purpose is to solve public problems and make people's lives better. Those with the talent, who in the past may have been drawn to public services, are often channeling their energies today into other areas where the path to achievement and security is more direct, simpler, or shorter. People who have acquired tremendous wealth have already met this test. From that base of assurance, they can venture into politics without fearing the loss of what they have already attained.

Center for State Policy & Leadership Financials

	Appropriated		NonAppropriated		Ratio
	Dollars	Percentage	Dollars	Percentage	
FY08	\$1,626,041	19.78%	\$6,594,690	80.22%	\$4.056
FY09	\$1,587,987	17.37%	\$7,552,190	82.63%	\$4.756
FY10	\$1,696,478	17.44%	\$8,028,639	82.56%	\$4.733
FY11	\$1,436,415	15.12%	\$8,064,199	84.88%	\$5.614
FY12	\$1,519,559	14.12%	\$9,239,001	85.88%	\$6.080
FY13	\$1,487,637	13.88%	\$9,226,833	86.12%	\$6.202
FY14	\$1,577,118	14.84%	\$9,052,428	85.16%	\$5.740
FY15	\$1,515,176	14.25%	\$9,120,804	85.75%	\$6.020
FY16	\$1,437,232	17.18%	\$6,930,739	82.82%	\$4.822
FY17	\$1,669,267	18.86%	\$7,179,477	81.14%	\$4.301



	Research	Education & Engaging	Public Leadership & Service	Undesignated	Total
Office of the Executive Director	\$217,358.19	\$90,296.43	\$200,487.26	\$1,719.00	\$509,860.88
Papers of Abraham Lincoln	\$418,102.57	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$418,102.57
Inst. for Legal, Legislative & Policy Stds	\$999,390.57	\$583,426.32	\$1,552,869.58	\$6.77	\$3,135,693.24
Office of Graduate Intern Programs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,907,412.32	\$0.00	\$2,907,412.32
Survey Research	\$302,000.19	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$302,000.19
Office of Electronic Media	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$251,274.69	\$0.00	\$251,274.69
NPR Illinois	\$0.00	\$1,324,400.45	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,324,400.45
Total	\$1,936,851.52	\$1,998,123.20	\$4,912,043.85	\$1,725.77	\$8,848,744.34
	21.89%	22.58%	55.51%	0.02%	

Comings and Goings



The Center welcomes to its staff in 2017 Sherrie Elzinga as the new director of the Office of Graduate Intern Programs (Graduate Public Service Internship, GPSI). Elzinga came to the university after serving many years as chief of staff in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, where she was also a longtime supervisor of graduate interns from UIS. Elzinga replaced Rance Carpenter who retired from UIS after six years at the helm of GPSI and grew the program to over 200 intern placements a year in more than twenty state agencies and other organizations.



The Center also bid farewell to Associate Director Dr. Barbara Ferrara. Joining the staff of the university's Center for the Study of Middle-size Cities in 1976, Ferrara served in various capacities in connection with Center and its forerunners for 41 years. She became Associate Director of the Center in 2002, and for three years was its interim Executive Director until Dr. Tony Halter was hired in 2006. Ferrara was the co-creator of the Illinois Channel, the state's version of C-SPAN and authored or co-authored more than 25 research and evaluation reports during her years with the Center. In her final decade and a half with the Center, Ferrara became best known for her outstanding work in establishing the Annual Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series in cooperation with the Naomi Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies.

Another longtime relationship also came to an end in 2017. After almost three decades, the Center ended its partnership with the Illinois Historical Preservation Agency in the operation of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln. Since 1989, the Center had served as the employer of the staff of the Lincoln Papers except for its director. The Papers of Abraham Lincoln is now wholly operated by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Meanwhile, as the Papers initiative left UIS, the university began in earnest to establish its own Lincoln Studies Center. This Center was recently approved and will begin operating from the UIS College of Liberal Arts and Sciences starting in 2018.

