

## **Legislative Interview with Representative Michael Marron, Illinois 104th District**

### **League of Women Voters of Champaign County**

Date of Interview: April 28, 2021

Interviewers: Theresa Michelson, Sara Kelley, Carol Bosley

#### **Synopsis**

Rep. Marron spent 30 minutes with us discussing these two priority questions provided by LWVIL. In addition, we were able to engage in discussion about a couple of other items as well.

***"Will you work to increase education funding every year (as mandated by law in 2017) for evidence-based distribution to schools to improve extreme funding inequities that severely impact students in low-income neighborhoods? Why or why not?"***

Rep. Marron said he believes the top two state funding priorities for Illinois should be education and transportation infrastructure. While he may have some disagreements with the Governor, he commends him on the priority he has placed on education funding. There is agreement with both parties that the property tax system of funding for education doesn't make a lot of sense. It is unequitable and an increasing burden on taxpayers, and prioritizing state education funding to address that is critical and timely.

***"Illinois has the potential to lead the nation in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and developing new green jobs in the next few years. What do you see as the next steps for the Illinois General Assembly to make this a reality? Do you support the Clean Energy Jobs Act (CEJA)? Why or why not?"***

Several versions of the energy bill passed the House – negotiations among all stakeholders took place and bits and pieces from all are in the emerging legislation. CEJA in its current form must be tweaked before it passes. He believes that a final bill with bi-partisan support will be voted on by the end of May.

Rep. Marron said Illinois will see a movement to greener, cleaner energy and there is a bi-partisan desire to do that. An important piece of the transition is that it must be favorable to business. How we make the transition as smoothly as possible is an important piece of the task. Rep. Marron relayed a story about the same day that he was recognized by the Illinois Environmental Council for his work related to climate and energy, he received an email from a citizen who said he likely would be losing his coal mining job because of that same work. A "leap of faith" is needed for people to believe that new green jobs will fully replace current jobs at the same level.

#### **Additional questions**

***"Where does you see new revenue coming from once the COVID money is gone - given the defeat of Fair Tax in the fall election?"***

Representative Marron said a lot of good ideas are passed that require funding, and the result is that we spread ourselves too thin. We need to tighten our belts and do a better job of prioritizing the list of good ideas. As well, one of the best ways to create money is a robust economy. A business-friendly environment will increase revenue, and legislators must give attention to that.

***"Criminal justice reform is an important issue for many voters. What are your views?"***

While not on the criminal justice reform committees, Rep. Marron said there is a need for criminal justice reform and there is bi-partisan interest in doing so. He believes there are two parts that should be included in reform – 1) a system/resources that give people – especially young people – opportunity for a second chance, and 2) to not allow people to take advantage of the system – consequences for criminal behavior must be part of the reform.

Rep. Marron said his concerns with the recently passed criminal justice reform bill is that some of the measures go too far – that we need reform, but we need accountability as well. When asked directly, he said his input was not sought nor that of his Republican colleagues for the criminal justice reform bill. This is frustrating because there is bi-partisan

support for reform. As well, he feels law enforcement was cut out of the process. There is a consensus among many that we are rushing reform, and not including all who should be included in the discussions.

### **Summary**

Rep. Marron ended saying, "what we are doing here – having a conversation such as this," is exactly what elected officials need to do with citizens and citizen groups, as relationships are developed. He is open to continued conversations with the LWVCC.