



FACT SHEET

OPPOSE PENSION LEGISLATION NOT ENDORSED BY WE ARE ONE COALITION

Public employee unions must be part of the solution. Our union coalition is committed to fair, constitutional and cooperative solutions to the pension funding crisis. To that end we have engaged in months of joint discussions with the legislative leaders and the governor’s office.

Responsibility for paying the pension debt must be shared. The pension funding problem was largely caused by the failure of politicians over decades to pay their fair share—essentially borrowing from employees’ pension funds to support other spending. All that time, workers made their payments faithfully and in full. Even so, workers are willing to be part of a cooperative solution—but they cannot be asked to bear the entire burden of the state’s pension debt alone.

There is no REAL “pension reform” without guaranteed funding. Our core goal is to ensure the solvency of the retirement systems with an enforceable guarantee of adequate state contributions going forward. We feel strongly that no pension reform can be credible without ironclad assurance that future required contributions will be made. But state leaders have repeatedly refused to agree to such a guarantee in law.

Our unions have offered specific solutions. We have proposed higher contributions from our members, in return for a guarantee that the state will pay its share going forward. Yet we have learned with great regret that legislative leaders are preparing to walk away from those promising discussions, short-circuiting progress toward a compromise that all parties can support.

Commitments to retirees must not be broken. It appears that the leadership bill will include cuts to the pension benefits of current retirees, most of whom do not receive Social Security and rely entirely on their modest public pension. Retirees should not be forced to choose between health care they can afford and a pension that is protected against the rising cost of living.

Cost-shifting to school districts and universities will raise property taxes and tuition. Proposals to shift pension costs to school districts, universities and community colleges will inevitably force cuts to the classroom, increased local property taxes and higher college tuition.

The We Are One Illinois labor coalition represents more than half a million teachers, caregivers, nurses and other public sector employees and retirees. Member unions include the Illinois AFL-CIO, Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois, AFSCME Council 31, Illinois Police Benevolent and Protective Association, Fraternal Order of Police, Service Employees International Union, Laborers International Union of North America Midwest Region, the Illinois Public Pension Fund Association, Illinois Public Pension Fund Association, National Pension Coalition, United Transportation Union, Laborers International Union of North America - Chicago District Council, AFSCME International Union, National Education Association, Fraternal Order of Police - Lodge 7 Chicago, Fireman’s Association of Chicago - Local 2 and Teamsters Local Union #700.

