

TUA NEWS RELEASE

Taxpayers United of America

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 27, 2020

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Illinois General Assembly: A Fish Rots From the Head Down

CHICAGO—Taxpayers United of America (TUA) today released the results of their updated analysis of Illinois' General Assembly Retirement System (GARS).

“For more than four decades, Madigan and his ilk have enshrined the theft of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars in an unsustainable government pension system at the expense of everyone else in Illinois. This is not a retirement system or a safety net for civil servants. This is theft, protected by government edicts and perpetuated by the immoral and unethical tax thieves that shuffle through the revolving doors in Springfield,” said Jim Tobin, founder and President of TUA.

“If Boss Madigan cared one bit about his constituents, we would have had pension reform decades ago, not to mention a current state budget, and then perhaps we wouldn't have a pension crisis at all.”

“Let's be clear about what this pension cabal is and what it is not. Six-figure government retiree pensions are not 'for the children.' This system isn't about the 'poor civil servants,' and it certainly isn't about fairness. The government pension Ponzi scheme is about the reelection of powerful legislators, the expansion of their voter base, and the money that pours in from donations,” said Tobin. “Just a quick look at some statistics from the GARS pension data analysis will shock Illinois residents and taxpayers.”

“For 2019 and 2020, two GARS pensions exceed \$200,000. From 2019 to 2020, the number of pensions exceeding \$100,000 has gone from 62 to 71, and the number exceeding \$50,000 has gone from 218 to 221. The highest annual pension, \$265,428, goes to retired legislator Arthur L. Berman (D), the author of the failed Berman Tax Increase Amendment, which we helped defeat years ago. Berman's total pension paid to date is \$3,670,815.”

“A central figure responsible for much of the pension crisis is former governor James R. Thompson (R), one of the worst tax-raisers in Illinois history. Thompson currently receives an annual pension of \$165,987. He has received a total pension to date of \$3,219,842. His estimated lifetime pension payout is \$3,385,829.”

“Former governor, Patrick J. Quinn Jr. (D), the so-called “reform” governor, currently receives an annual pension of \$149,882. He has received a total pension to date of \$694,733. His estimated lifetime pension payout is \$3,255,658.”

“Former legislator and governor, James R. Edgar (R), receives a current annual pension of \$175,952. He has received a total pension to date of \$2,502,093, and his estimated lifetime pension payout is \$4,755,649.”

“Edgar signed into law Senate Bill 3 in 1998, the biggest government pension increase in the history of Illinois. SB3 gave retired government teachers 75% of their salary at retirement, with annual compounded increases of 3 percent. SB3 will cost taxpayers \$4.5 billion in 2020, which is 12% of the Illinois state budget!”

“John Kass of the Chicago Tribune often refers to Illinois’ Speaker of the House as the Khan of Madiganistan, and for good reason. Madigan conducts himself like a warlord and has done so for decades. If he had an ethical bone in his body, he never would have supported the Constitutional Amendment that launched the era of runaway government pensions and began the state’s financial downward spiral. Even after that woeful Constitutional Convention in 1970, the Khan of Madiganistan has had countless opportunities while in his leadership role as Speaker of the house and as a legislator for the past 45 years to limit the perks given to state retirees, much less reform the system that is driving taxpayers from the state like refugees seeking a fresh start.”

“It is criminal that our legislature, under Madigan’s leadership, allows this to continue,” said Tobin. “Part-time legislator pensions shouldn’t be as lavish as our data shows, but unfortunately for taxpayers, this is the financial trouble we are facing.”

[Click here to see the top 200 list of GARS pensioners](#)

“It is plain to see the conflict of interest in having legislators, who are supposed to vote on our behalf, benefit from the very system that enriches them and impoverishes the rest of Illinois. There are a handful of legislators in the current General Assembly with some moral fiber who have declined to participate in the pension system, and we applaud their integrity, but that short list does not include Boss Madigan, the Khan of Madiganistan.”

“Are you listening, Speaker Madigan? Where is the government pension reform? Where do your loyalties lie?” Tobin challenged, “Before the Illinois General Assembly considers even discussing a new income tax on retirement benefits or raising the state income tax, the state’s political elite better be aware that residents won’t stand for it, and Taxpayers United of America will lead the charge against the continued pillaging of taxpayers.”

*Lifetime estimated pension payout includes 3% compounded COLA and assumes life expectancy of 85 (IRS Form 590).