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STATE UNIVERSITIES RETIREMENT SYSTEM SHOWS WHY GOV. PENSIONS ARE BANKRUPTING ILLINOIS

Gov. Jay Robert “J. B.” Pritzker and his allies in the Democrat-controlled Illinois General Assembly are telling voters that their constitutional amendment to the Illinois Constitution, on the November 3 statewide ballot, would create a “fair” graduated state income tax. They make the astonishing claim that taxes would be raised only on those who can afford it, and that middle- and lower-class families would not be adversely affected. Does anyone really believe that?

Almost all of the recent \$5 billion increase in the state income tax was pumped into the state pension plans for retired government employees. Even this huge amount didn’t move the needle. These bighearted pension plans are still floundering and slowly dying. Now, J. B. and his fellow Democrats in the general assembly are back for more, and in a really big way.

If passed, the Pritzker amendment would result in another shameless transfer of wealth – and a huge one – from workers in the private sector struggling to pay their bills to retired government employees already enjoying lavish, gold-plated pensions.

The [2020 Illinois Government Pension report published by the Taxpayer Education Foundation examines the six government pension plans in the state](#). A look at just one of them, the State Universities Retirement System (SURS) is enlightening, and shows why these pension plans are functionally bankrupt and require frequent infusions of taxpayer dollars.

- The average retirement age of government teachers in SURS is 61.1 and they collect pensions after only 18.4 years of employment. The average annual pension is \$38,826, whereas the average annual Social Security benefit of workers in the private sector who retire in their 60s is \$18,036.
- The number of SURS pensions exceeding \$50,000 is 19,753. The number of pensions exceeding \$100,000 is 5,435.
- 299 retired government teachers receive annual pensions exceeding \$200,000. 49 retired teachers receive annual pensions over \$300,000.
- The number of SURS pensions that will exceed \$1,000,000 in estimated lifetime payouts is 25,499. The average estimated lifetime payout per pension is \$982,463.

Taxpayers, through their state taxes, have so far paid \$1,713,300,000 into SURS, and they will be paying a lot more into this and the other state pension plans if Pritzker’s income theft amendment passes on November 3.