

TUA NEWS RELEASE

TAXPAYERS UNITED OF AMERICA

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Peoria Taxpayers Held Hostage by Government Pensions

Peoria--Jim Tobin, founding President of Taxpayers United of America (TUA) was in Peoria July 14 urging the local government to support reform of the Illinois state government pension system.

“In April, City of Peoria taxpayers [voted overwhelmingly against advisory property tax hikes to pay government employee pensions](#),” said Tobin. “79.3% of voters said no to raising property taxes for police pensions and 74% of voters said no to a firefighter property tax increase.”

“The elephant in the room has been ignored long enough. It is literally destroying the City of Peoria and has to be addressed.”

“In 2018, Peoria got rid of 22 firefighter and 16 police positions. In 2019, Peoria residents faced a new property tax devoted to funding police and fire pensions, which are already funded by property taxes. In 2020, the city cut 45 jobs and offered early retirement incentives to deal with budgeting issues.”

“The Peoria pension problem has grown so bad [that according to City Manager Patrick Urich, it is cheaper to run local police and fire ragged with overtime than to hire new government employees](#). In our upside-down world, \$4.6M in 2020 overtime pay is the least expensive option.”

“[According to the city manager, in the last 10 years the city eliminated 145 positions from the city’s budget, and put that money into pensions](#). Aren’t taxpayer dollars supposed to go to essential services? Are retired government employees really more essential to Peoria residents than police, fire, and other government services?”

“I would love to show you the astounding pensions that police and fire receive, but government unions and Illinois Governor Jay Robert ‘J. B.’ Pritzker closed the book on that throughout the state. However, I do have plenty of other city and local pensions to give as examples.”

“Take for example former City of Peoria employee Michael D McKnight. McKnight receives, courtesy of taxpayer property taxes, an estimated \$148,104 annually, and he retired at the ripe old age of 59. For a measly contribution of \$99,325 to the pension fund, he is estimated to receive \$2,600,808 from his pension. Not a bad deal.”

“The Peoria government pension system, like the rest of the Illinois government pension system, is broken. There are ways solve the pension crisis, but they are growing further out of reach. The enormous downward economic pressure because of population loss in example makes it hard to grow out of pension debt.”

“Peoria elected officials should pass a resolution calling for the Illinois General Assembly to enact a pension reform amendment to the Illinois constitution. Such an amendment would enable Peoria to restructure its pension debts and to be fairer for both taxpayers and government employees looking to retire.”

“Additionally, placing all new hires in a 401(k) system would reduce costs and grant government employees more control over their retirement strategy.”

[Click Here](#) to View all Peoria City Pensions of \$100,000 2021

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