

BLUELINE

News from the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police



November 2011

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General Assembly Completes First Week of Fall Veto Session

By Dan Nelson

Members of the Illinois General Assembly returned to Springfield last week for the start of the fall veto session on Tuesday, October 25. The events of the first day, including various filings and activities, proved to be a good indication that the two-week session will be lively, with the potential for significant impact to the membership of the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police. The State Lodge is actively monitoring several pieces of legislation:

House Bill 3813, sponsored by Representative Tom Cross (R-Oswego), was passed by the full House on October 27 to amend the Illinois Pension Code. Specifically, the legislation provides that, for certain leaves of absence during which a participant is employed by a labor organization, pension contributions shall be based upon the participant's regular salary (rather than the salary received from the organization). This bill was drafted in response to cases where some union leaders have used a loophole in the pension code to receive two pensions simultaneously.

Notable Amendments

- Amendment 4: The day before HB 3813 was called before the full House, Rep. Cross amended the legislation and called for a special meeting of the Pension Committee to include ALL public employees in the state. This amendment modified the original bill that only included the Chicago municipal, Chicago laborers and Chicago teachers articles of the code.
- Amendment 5: At the urging of the State Lodge, Rep. Cross agreed to add an amendment to exempt police officers and firefighters from the legislation. While the amendment was not added in time for the vote on the House floor, Representative Cross expressed his commitment to the entire House that he will work to ensure that the amendment is included when the bill arrives in the Senate. The modified text can be found in **HB 3813 Amendment #5**.

House Bill 3815, sponsored by Representative Karen May (D-Highland Park), was also passed by the full House on October 27. HB 3815 establishes that a leave of absence without pay during employment with a local labor organization is not to be included in computing total years of service.

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From the Desk of Ted Street, President Illinois Fraternal Order of Police

The value of membership and participation in associations, coalitions and unions has never been greater.

During the 25-year history of public sector collective bargaining in Illinois for police and fire, it has been common for little communication or cooperation to exist between the various organizations who represent labor. We each co-existed, with occasional contact to merely demonstrate professional courtesy or to discuss a short-term issue of little significance.

However, over the last three years, the challenges we all face have required regular communication, cooperation and coalition building. We must work together to effectively counter attacks and defend our long standing rights.

Over the last several months, the Police and Fire Coalition has expanded to include all Illinois' public sector unions, resulting in the WE ARE ONE campaign. The long-standing phrase in union representation—"There is strength in numbers"—has taken on meaning like never before. I am encouraged to see adversaries, competitors and non-traditional groups forge a task force that is absolutely unmatched in resources and skills to wage battle in protecting the rights of working class men and women.

The message of truth and solidarity is resounding and spreading across the state of Illinois on behalf of state and local government employees. The level of comfort brought by competitive wages, hours, terms and conditions

of employment, along with job security, is no longer the same reality it once was. The rank and file, dues paying, card carrying member must step out and become involved in the grassroots efforts to support local, state and national leaders who are on the front lines protecting what they have earned.

There is "skin in the game" by every individual who serves the citizens of Illinois. This is not the time to leave representation to someone else. Each member must become informed, mobilized and reactive in protecting the future for all concerned.

The Fraternal Order of Police, Illinois State Lodge continues to maintain its commitment to defending current legislation and introducing improved legislation on behalf of its members. We have a full-time staff person dedicated to working the state capitol. We are not an island into ourselves; we are partners and team players with the goal of vigorous advocacy in promoting and protecting the profession of law enforcement.

Please use the resources made available to you through the State Lodge to become better informed and more involved. We have common causes like never before and we must forge unity on every front to afford the successes entitled to public safety officers and their families.

Be Safe!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Street". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Exclusive for Members – FOP License Plates Now Available

The Illinois Fraternal Order of Police (ILFOP) is excited to announce the availability of specialty license plates for active and retired members.

The Illinois FOP license plate is exclusive to members. Revenue from the license plates will aid in education and scholarship opportunities for members and their children, financial

relief in times of need for members and their families, and community outreach.

[Download the Application Now!](#)



SAVE THE DATE! Illinois FOP To Host Biennial Conference in July

The Illinois Fraternal Order of Police (ILFOP) will host its 2012 biennial conference in East Peoria on July 26-28, 2012. Save the date and plan to join fellow ILFOP members and staff for two days of business, education and fraternalism.

The conference will be held at the newly constructed Embassy Suites and Conference Center. Members will soon be able to book lodging electronically

on the State Lodge website. Staff will e-mail members with a link to the conference page as soon as this feature becomes available.

Tazewell County Lodge 98 will host a golf outing on Thursday, July 26 in conjunction with the ILFOP conference. In addition, a hospitality room will be available both evenings of the conference. More information about the golf outing and other

conference events will be forthcoming over the next weeks and months.

To receive updates regarding the conference, as well as other important ILFOP news, please join our mailing list:



Fall Veto Session, continued from page one.

Notable Amendments:

- Amendment 1: Initially drafted to only affect Chicago municipal employees, the final legislation passed by the full House includes an amendment made by Rep. May on October 24 to include all public employees in Illinois who take leave to work in their respective unions.
- Amendment 2: Following testimony to the Pension Committee on October 25, Rep. May agreed to an amendment that would exempt police officers and firefighters. As with House Bill 3813, the amendment was not added in time for the full House vote, but Representative May publicly stated her commitment to the amendment on the House floor prior to voting.

House Bill 3827, sponsored by Representative Cross, attempts to terminate the existing pension boards for Chicago police officers, Chicago

firefighters, Chicago municipal workers, Chicago laborers, Chicago park district employees and Chicago teachers. A majority of the members of these boards would be shifted to management appointments (instead of members and annuitants). As a primary result of the advocacy effort of the Chicago FOP lodge, this legislation was not called for a vote in committee.

House Joint Resolution 045, introduced by Speaker Madigan at the beginning of the veto session, would give the General Assembly power to prospectively limit any wage increases for state employees, as well as increases associated with collectively bargained contracts throughout state government. In effect, the resolution states that the size of, or a reduction in, the state employee workforce shall not be a topic of collective bargaining. This legislation is only a resolution, so it is advisory and does not have the weight of law, but it is notable in that it demonstrates the speaker's resolve

to be included in the negotiation process.

The State Lodge will continue to closely follow these and all other pieces of legislation that affect its membership. The second week of the fall veto session will be held November 8 – 10.



Click to join firefighters, teachers, police officers, disability caregivers and other public employees in the fight to protect pensions.

Did You Pay Your Per Capita Dues?

Just a reminder that the per capita dues deadline for 2012 was November 1, 2012. If you have not remitted payment, please do so immediately. A late fee of 10 percent will begin being assessed on all dues not paid on or before December 1, 2011.

Please contact State Lodge staff at (800) 522-2677 with questions and for all necessary paperwork if you did not receive the packet in the mail.

State Lodge staff look forward to working with you in 2012 and beyond.

Financial News You Can Use

Don't Put All Your Financial Eggs in Government or Corporate Baskets

By Rebecca Phillips

There's an age-old adage that goes something like this: If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself. Could it also be that if you expect to have money for retirement, you need to plan and save it yourself?

Americans who have put all their hopes (and eggs) in the state and federal "baskets" of guaranteed financial security are quickly realizing how true this is.

As a result of...

- Dwindling or nonexistent faith in federal entitlement programs, including social security and Medicare, plus...
- Threats of drastic cuts and changes to pension programs and retiree health care benefits, plus...
- An economic recession, a shaky stock market, state and federal budget crises, people living longer lives, the rising costs of health care, and a host of other contributing factors...

....more Americans are realizing that they need to have their own plan for a secure retirement.

Dwindling Confidence in the Social Security System and Medicare Entitlements

According to a USA Today/Gallup Poll conducted in 2010¹, only 36 percent of Americans believe they will ever receive social security benefits.

This represents a significant decrease over 2001 and 2005 results, in which 52 and 45 percent (respectively) of those surveyed believe the social security system will be able to pay them a benefit. Of retirees who are currently receiving benefits, a majority believe their benefits will eventually be cut.

Even with cost of living adjustments (COLA) in 2009 and 2012, many realize that the inflation rate of commodities, health care, and other services are rising at a much faster annualized rate.

The debt "talks" of 2011 likely only further exacerbated these beliefs, with President Barack Obama proposing to reduce the federal deficit with cuts to social security, Medicare and other federal entitlement programs.

At the time this article was written, Congress was debating the president's proposed \$320 billion cut to the Medicaid and Medicare programs. As the federal entitlement program for providing health care to senior citizens, a reduced federal investment in the Medicare program could drastically increase the out-of-pocket health care costs of current and future retirees; subsequently decreasing most retirees' expendable income and threatening financial security.

Government or Corporate-Sponsored Pension and Health Care Benefits May Not Be Around

In the last decade, nearly all states have made or proposed changes to their state pension plan through lower benefits for new hires, extended retirement ages and bigger contributions from employees. These reforms—mostly fueled by a bad economy and unprecedented state and federal budget deficits—are of great concern to employees, with the older ones looking at the calendar and punching numbers to see how soon they can get out and avoid system changes.

According to a recent *Federal Times* article², organizers of federal retirement seminars say they have seen a surge in participants, and

have even had to schedule additional seminars to accommodate the growing interest.

If there is any advantage to these unfortunate realities, it is that more Americans are taking charge of their financial future.

The Illinois Fraternal Order of Police has partnered with Beacon Financial Group to bring exclusive insurance and financial benefits to its members.

The following exclusive services are available to members of the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police:

Financial Literacy

ILFOP members receive free web-based access to the Money Coach website that is designed to raise financial literacy across a broad spectrum of real life topics.

Financial Planning

Beacon Financial Group actively provides financial review and planning services for Illinois FOP members.

Protection

Voluntary benefits—exclusive "best in class" programs for Illinois FOP members—include life, disability, accident, critical illness, health, dental and vision insurance plans, as well as Medicare supplement, long-term care, and much more.

Call Beacon today at (888) 769-4333 or visit them online at www.beacon-financial.net.

¹USA Today/Gallup. (July 2010). Final Topline. Retrieved October 17, 2011 from www.gallup.com/poll/141449/Six-Workers-Hold-No-Hope-Receiving-Social-Security.aspx; ²Losey, S. (2011). Feds plan their exits: Interest surges in retirement seminars. *Federal Times*. Retrieved October 19, 2011 from www.federaltimes.com/article/20110912/BEN-EFITS02/109120301?#.TM5ZixvNW@iw.email.

About the Fraternal Order of Police, Illinois State Lodge

The Fraternal Order of Police, Illinois State Lodge serves a community of nearly 35,000 active duty and retired police officers by providing up-to-date information that is easy to find and use, including a newsletter, calendar of events and legislative updates.

Mission

The FOP, Illinois State Lodge has adopted the following MISSION: "To encourage fraternal, charitable, and social activities among law enforcement officers. To increase the efficiency of the law enforcement profession and thus more firmly establish the confidence of the public in the service dedicated to the protection of life and property." Current Lodge focus areas include attracting new members and associate members, informing members, the public and encouraging donations to support member benefits and programs.

Lodge Preamble

"We, the law enforcement officers of the State of Illinois and the several political subdivisions thereof, as representatives and delegates of the subordinate Lodges, do hereby associate the several Lodges we represent and the members thereof for the following purposes:

To support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the State of Illinois; to inculcate loyalty and allegiance to the state of Illinois and the United States of America; to promote and foster the enforcement of law and order; to improve the individual and collective proficiency of our members in the performance of their duties; to encourage fraternal, educational, charitable and social activities among law enforcement officers; to advocate and strive for uniform application of the civil service merit system for appointment and promotion; to support the improvement of the standard of living and working conditions of the law enforcement profession through every legal and ethical means available; to create and maintain the tradition of esprit de corps, insuring fidelity of duty under all conditions and circumstances; to cultivate a spirit of fraternalism and mutual helpfulness among our members and the people we serve; to increase the efficiency of the law enforcement profession, and thus more firmly to establish the confidence of the public in the service dedicated to the protection of life and property."

JOIN!



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