

Easy solutions

Newt Gingrich is lobbying for the ability of states to file bankruptcy to get out from under their pension obligations. This way states could then slash pensions to those who have already retired, and reduce pension benefits to those who are currently employed. What a shortsighted and amazingly dangerous solution. What happens to those public retirees who rely on this pension? Most police and firefighters are not covered by social security, so they don't have that as a backup. So now how do these retirees pay their bills? Most do not have large savings. We are talking about middle class people. So now their pensions are gone; they can't pay their bills. Which affects businesses? The domino effect will start. Now we have 100's of thousands of public employees who have retired in financial distress. This is not a solution. It is a disaster. Any thought of easy solutions always leads to other bigger problems. As a retired police officer I always find it interesting that politicians such as Newt Gingrich love to tell us how much they value us. How they stand up for tough laws on offenders, gun rights, death penalty and so on. But when asked about where they stand on benefits for police and firefighters, well that's a different story.

So-called conservatives will always point to all the tough crime laws they support. But forget about those who have to enforce them. We don't deserve good pensions. We aren't valued. In Chicago there is an organization called the Commercial Club. Its membership consists of CEO's of the largest companies in Illinois. They have been complaining that we have benefits that aren't "FAIR". And then don't say what is fair for police and firefighters. Only that we should have a smaller pension and lower salary. Millionaires telling me, that I'm overpaid! Well how about those CEO's are they overpaid. Should they take a pay cut and maybe save a few people their jobs. That would do more good then attacking middle class police and fire retirees. Oh, if I point out that they are millionaires; that's class warfare. But they can complain that we are overpaid. One thing the public knows is how much they pay for these services. But they don't know every time they buy food or other products how much goes into the CEO's pocket. Everybody gets paid by the public. There are no easy solutions to the underfunded public pension systems. But getting out from under your obligations solves nothing.