

# THE TRUTH ABOUT PUBLIC PENSIONS

## WE ARE ONE ILLINOIS

### ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES

**Firefighters and police, teachers and nurses, child protection workers and disability caregivers** are just some of the public employees that Illinois residents rely on every day, in every community, in every part of the state.

### POLITICIANS CAUSED PENSION DEBT

**For decades, Illinois politicians shorted or skipped the employer contributions required by law, creating the nation's largest pension debt.** All that time, public employees paid their fair share. It's wrong to punish public employees for the actions—or inaction—of irresponsible politicians.

### PUBLIC EMPLOYEES PAY

**A public employee's pension is his or her own life savings—they typically contribute 8 percent, 9 percent or more from each paycheck to their pension fund.** Illinois public employees have always paid their share, faithfully and in full.

### NO SOCIAL SECURITY

**Most Illinois public employees are ineligible for Social Security.** Unlike every private-sector worker in America, police and firefighters, teachers and university employees, city of Chicago and Cook County employees don't qualify for Social Security. Reducing the pension they earn would leave many public employees with little to fall back on in retirement.

### PENSIONS ARE MODEST

**Illinois public employees retire on very modest pensions**—on average just \$32,000 a year after a career dedicated to public service. Many receive much less than this average amount.

### PROTECTED BY THE CONSTITUTION

**The Illinois Constitution states that membership in a public pension system is an enforceable contractual relationship, “the benefits of which may not be diminished or impaired.”** That plain language means it is unconstitutional to reduce pension benefits or increase contributions of current public employees. Legislation violating this constitutional protection will cause a costly and wasteful court challenge.