

RETIREE NOTES

Illinois Policy Institute targets AFSCME retirees

CHAPTER 31 RETIREE MEMBERS who receive their pensions from SURS and IMRF have been targeted by the Illinois Policy Institute (IPI). These retirees received a letter from the IPI attacking AFSCME and other unions and urging retirees to revoke their membership in AFSCME Retirees Chapter 31.

The IPI is the same organization that has waged an unrelenting attack on public employee pensions in Illinois in recent years, including leading a charge for a constitutional amendment to abolish the pension protection clause in the Illinois State Constitution. They want to open the door to drastic cuts in public employee pensions—or to eliminate them altogether.

If the pensions of current employees or new hires are eliminated, that will destabilize the entire pension system, putting retirees' hard-earned retirement security at risk.

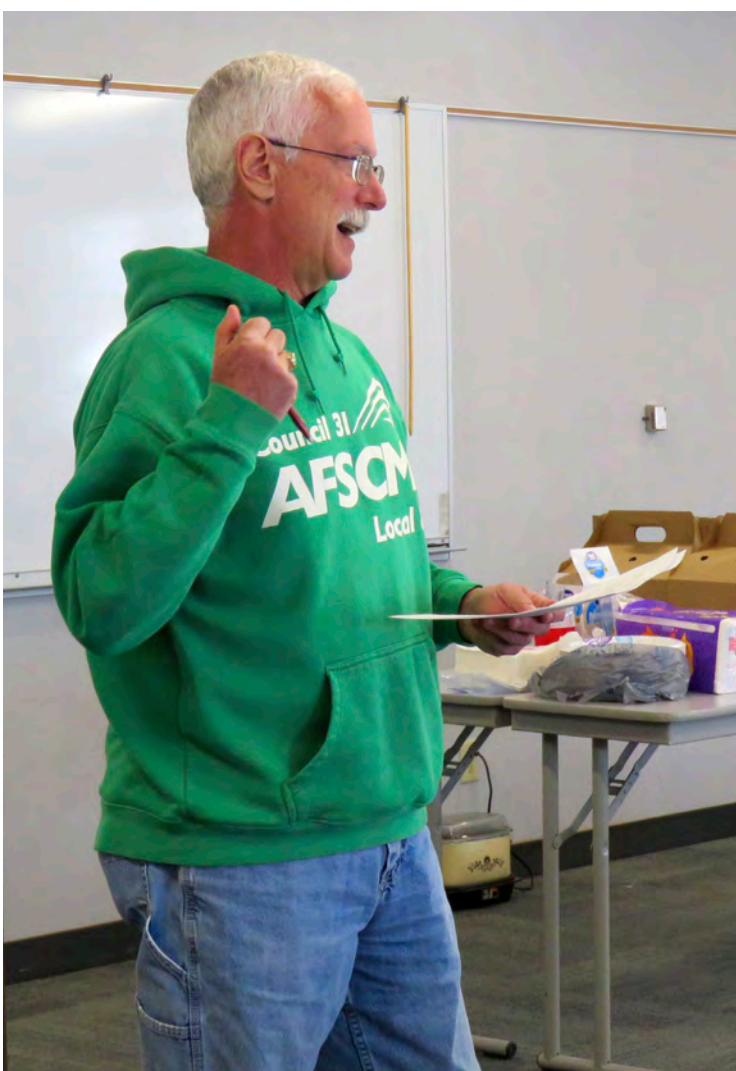
AFSCME has fought all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court to safeguard pension benefits and fought off Bruce Rauner's efforts to drastically reduce

retiree health care benefits. AFSCME has been leading the fight for dignity and security in retirement for public employees for decades and members are critical to that effort.

“Members should not be misled by the IPI’s attempts to trick retirees.”

“Members should not be misled by the IPI’s attempts to trick retirees into dropping out of AFSCME,” said Retirees Chapter 31 President Larry Brown. “That would deprive the union of the resources needed to win legal and legislative battles protecting retirement security.

“If you or anyone you know received this mailing, please respond to the Illinois Policy Institute mailer just like thousands of current public employees have done: Tear it up and throw it out,” Brown said. “Continue to be part of AFSCME Retirees Chapter 31, the most effective force standing up for public sector retirees today.”



Sub-Chapter 86 member Gary Mazzotti speaks to fellow retirees at a Springfield membership meeting.

SERS Trustee Election

Vote to protect your pension.

In the SERS trustee election, your vote is your voice.

Vote Melissa Garman to fight for your retirement security!



Melissa Garman



SERS Annuitants: Watch for your ballot the week of May 1, mark it for Melissa Garman and return it right away! Ballots due May 30.

SERS Retirees: Vote for Garman

“I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT retirees need to have a strong representative on the pension board to protect the benefits that we’ve earned,” said Melissa Garman, Chapter 31 executive board member and candidate for the open State Employees Retirement System (SERS) Retiree Trustee position.

Garman is a longtime AFSCME member who became an advocate for her fellow public employees after being hired by the Department of Children and Family Services in 1985. She was a union steward in Local 448 for many years. After retiring in 2016 she joined AFSCME Chapter 31 and was soon elected president of her DeKalb County sub-chapter and a member of the Chapter Executive Board.

“I have a deep understanding of the issues retirees face and understand the importance of communicating up-to-date information,” said Melissa. “I hope state retirees choose to support me on the ballot.”

SERS will be mailing out the ballots to all annuitants around May 1. Cast your vote for Melissa Garman and return the ballot by May 30.

Legislative attacks on pensions

BILLS WERE INTRODUCED this legislative session to either eliminate or seriously undermine the pension protection

clause in the Illinois State Constitution, including HC19, HC20, HC 21, & SC9.

In addition, HB 1625 proposes creating a third-tier, 401k-style pension plan that would put all investment risk on employees. And HB 3131 would require each retirement

for decades for not fully funding public pensions.”

(See page 8-9 for facts on the fair tax.)

Prescription drug costs

DRUG COMPANIES ARE MAKING huge profits by hiking the prices on medications that seniors depend upon.

The retail prices of some of the most popular medications older Americans take to treat everything from diabetes to high blood pressure increased by an average of 8.4% in 2017. This rate of increase is four times the rate of inflation.

AFSCME is taking action. At the federal level, AFSCME and partners in the Alliance for Retired Americans are asking Congress to insist on the removal of extraordinary monopoly protections for pharmaceutical firms in the revised North American Free Trade Agreement. Failure to



Stay connected & take action

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system to post online the names of all persons receiving an annuity and the amount of the annuity paid.

“We need to protect the benefits we’ve earned.”

“We continue to rigorously oppose all such legislation,” Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch said. “But we must also support commonsense legislation, like the fair tax, to finally fix the chronic structural deficit that has been used as the excuse

strike these provisions from the pact will provide huge giveaways to Big Pharma and keep medicines unaffordable.

On the state level, Chapter 31 has joined a coalition supporting legislation to lower the costs of prescription drugs:

- HB 53 would make manufacturers explain why they raise prices and require drug makers to provide justification for price increases above a certain threshold.
- HB 1441 would allow for importation of safe, low-cost drugs from Canada.
- HB 3493 creates a board to oversee and regulate drug price increases so manufacturers can't take advantage of patent monopolies to raise costs on sick people.