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May 29, 2019

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker  
Office of the Governor of Illinois  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: Reduced pensions system payments

Dear Governor Pritzker,

The Board of Directors of the Illinois State Employees Association Retirees (ISEA Retirees) voices our strongest objection to any policy of shorting pension payments to the State of Illinois government workers' pension funds.

The membership of the Illinois State Employees Association Retirees consists solely of retired State of Illinois government employees. We are the oldest association of our kind in the state.

Many of our members remember a time of grave concern by state government workers that state pension "promises" would not be met. Many wrestled with a decision whether to leave state government employment out of fear that the unprotected promise of a pension would leave state retirees and dependents with no meaningful means of support in the retirement years.

With that as the backdrop in 1970, the Sixth Illinois Constitutional Convention added the Pension Clause to the Illinois Constitution to protect workers' state pensions by creating "an enforceable contractual relationship, the benefits of which shall not be diminished or impaired." (Illinois Constitution, Article XIII, § 5, Pension and Retirement Rights)

Most significantly, the Illinois Supreme Court recently recognized that one of the fundamental reasons for the Pension Protection Clause was to protect against the very policy that was proposed earlier this legislative session.

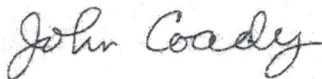
Delegates were also mindful that in the past, appropriations to cover state pension obligations had "been made a political football" and **"the party in power would just use the amount of the state contribution to help balance budgets," jeopardizing**

**the resources available to meet the State's obligations to participants in its pension systems in the future.** Kanerva v. Weems, 2014 IL 115811 at ¶45 quoting IV Proceedings, Sixth Ill. Constitutional Convention 2930-31 (1970) (statements of Delegate Bottino) [emphasis added].

The ISEA Retirees Board was alarmed by the media reports about your proposal as governor to reduce required payments to the pension fund. We were greatly relieved that based upon unexpected tax revenues in April you reconsidered your proposal and the full pension payments will be made. But there is no indication that you would not consider a similar move in the future.

We urge you to recognize the jeopardy to the solvency of the pension funds by this misguided policy. We emphasize to you that the daunting challenges facing the underfunded state pension systems now were created by the very policy you had proposed, that is, the legislative and executive practice of deferring pension payments. Finally, we encourage you and your administration to explore all avenues for reducing the unfunded liabilities of the state pensions systems.

Very truly yours,



John Coady, Board President  
Illinois State Employees Association Retirees

JC

cc: Michael Madigan, Speaker of the House  
House Majority Leader, Greg Harris  
House Minority Leader, Jim Durkin

Senate President, John Cullerton  
Senate Majority Kimberly Lightford  
Senate Minority Leader, Bill Brady