

NTUI NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL TAXPAYERS UNITED OF ILLINOIS

407 S. Dearborn, Suite 1170 * CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605

(312) 427-5128 * Fax (312) 427-5139 * Web Site <www.ntui.org> * E-mail <ntui@ntui.org>

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Contact: Jim Tobin (312) 427-5128

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FRONT GROUP “A+ ILLINOIS” PUSHES 67% STATE INCOME TAX INCREASE TO PAD SALARY AND PENSION BENEFITS OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

CHICAGO—The president of Illinois’ largest taxpayer organization today charged that the organization, “A+ Illinois,” was attempting to deceive Illinois taxpayers by misrepresenting its proposed state income tax increase as “modest,” and that the benefits from such an increase would not help students in public schools but, rather, pad the obscenely large salaries and pensions of public school teachers and administrators.

“A+ Illinois is a front group for public school teachers and administrators,” said **Jim Tobin**, President of National Taxpayers United of Illinois (NTUI). “This government employee union-funded organization is spending a fortune on full-page newspaper ads calling for a ‘modest’ increase in the state personal income tax. This so-called modest increase, from three to five percent, is actually a huge, 67 percent increase in the state income tax.”

“The group, in its ads, claims that this added influx of taxpayer dollars would benefit students in government schools, but in reality, the money would help only the greedy and already-overpaid teachers and administrators, who would see their lavish salaries and pensions become even more gold-plated.”

“A May 2007 report by ABC7 News Team illustrated the staggering costs to taxpayers: Of the hundred retired Illinois employees drawing the highest pensions, 95 are educators, and over 1,100 retired teachers have pensions of over \$111,000 a year, and were eligible to retire at age 55.” (See <http://ntui.org/files/ITEFComment13-4.pdf>)

“Public school teachers are paid much more than most people realize,” said Tobin. “The average pay for a teacher in Illinois is \$57,000 a year, and almost 3,500 teachers make more than \$100,000 a year for 9 months employment.”

“A May 2007 report by the Illinois Taxpayer Education Foundation (ITEF) revealed that eighteen former state employees, all retired university or public school educators, receive, each year, over \$200,000 in pension benefits. Persons commonly live into their 70s and 80s. A government employee who made \$100,000 a year and retired at age 55, and lived to age 75, would receive a total of more than \$2 million in pension payments, due to cumulative annual increases. Pensioners who live into their 70s or 80s collect far more in retirement than they made on the job. These retirement pensions would become even higher if the state personal income tax is raised.”

“There is no need to make rich government school teachers and administrators even wealthier, on the backs of Illinois taxpayers,” said Tobin. “What government schools need is more competition from private schools, which do a better job for half the money. The way to really help students is to increase the \$500 tuition tax credit. Making government employees wealthier is not the answer.”

Founded in 1976, NTUI is the largest taxpayer organization in Illinois with over 10,000 members and affiliation with more than 200 local taxpayer organizations.

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