

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

The Fall Veto Session and You

As our Illinois General Assembly is enjoying their summer, we all anxiously await the return of our legislators to the Fall Veto Session.

What is the veto session that we hear so much about? Well, after the General Assembly sends their bills to the governor during the winter and spring time period, he has 60 days to sign them, veto them, or do nothing. Many of these bills passed by both houses have not been completed before the boys and girls go home for the summer, and the governor may not have had time to review some before our state capital signs off for vacation.

Those bills that the governor signs or does nothing on become law. Those he vetoed get another chance in October and November. Then our legislators reconsider these bills where they can override the governor's veto by "repassing" a bill with a three-fifth's super majority in both houses. Of course, the legislators can introduce new bills in a Veto Session, too.

While it is anticipated that police pension issues may come up in the Veto Session, it is anyone's guess if they will pass or get put to rest until next year. Politicians put off passage of a compromised pension bill in the spring and may do so again until after the November 2010 elections. There may be some fear going on here due to these upcoming elections to pass more pension reform when some of them don't know if they will even be there anymore walking the rotunda after November.

So you have time to call, write, e-mail, or fax your representatives. Tell them you are a cop and do not want to see your pensions changed, nor do you want to see the future of our fellow officers' pensions reduced like they did with the teachers.

We are all doing our part, folks, but there is nothing like a grass roots or tea party movement to get some attention. Remember to copy the House Speaker, Mike Madigan, and the Senate Leader, John Cullerton. These two individuals do not need union backing to carry on in their traditions of leadership. They should, but they don't. So they do not look to unions for much support. But they can call a bill out to the floor or kill it with their influence, so we as union members should make our voices heard to them and others.

Last spring, both were under fire with the press. Madigan, with his involvement with admissions of students at the University of Illinois when a contributor's child or relative got admitted, and then he received a donation to his war chest. This has caused him some grief. The media has asked how many young people with the proper qualifications were passed over for connected individuals.

Mr. Cullerton was also under the glare as his law firm has allegedly received money for doing some tax appeal work for contributors.

Is this all just more pay-to-play, favoritism, or business as usual? Is it the way Springfield works—so it's all okay? If it is, then fine, but let's call out our leaders to do the right thing for a big constituency—us! Especially since they, too, have an annual salary, benefits, office expenses, and a future pension as well as other possible perks. Cops as well as civilians seem to be supporting that, so let them know we are watching.

But I don't single out just Mr. Madigan and Mr. Cullerton. They all need to know that the junkyard dogs are loose and can bite. But they are our representative leaders in the House and the Senate, and they should be accountable to cops, if not unions, as well as the citizenry.

They need to hear from you. Not in contributions. We aren't in that league, as we are cops and work under a different guideline—ethics.

You can use your pen, your phone, or your computer to make your point. They aren't hard to find. Drop them a note.

Vita é bella

Have a safe and Happy 4th of July!

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