

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Halloween is over. Take off the masks!

Yes, it is. But many are still scared. I see many politicians still wearing their scary masks. As the Fall Veto session carries on, politicians are careful not to show their true faces on our pension issues, except for maybe Michael Madigan, who seems to have thrown in with his Republican counterpart in desiring to change our pensions.

Just like those *Scary Movie*” projects, this just won’t end. It’s the same plot...just different characters utilizing silly, exaggerated marketing strategies.

Earlier, the good guys put out some ads and a TV spot trying to get the truth out. The press was lukewarm on it, warning against the “spin” that is inherent in all of these endeavors.

But it was truthful. The sad fact remains that it is the state and the municipalities that have FUBAR’d this problem. It is the failure to pay what government has been mandated to pay for years that has led to this problem.

It is government that diverted funds earmarked for pensions. It is government who is lying about it. Case in point—state employees like teachers and corrections and state police are affected by their employers’ foolishness on a grand scale. Local county and municipalities and many other employees are not. Our pension fund, one of at least nine in the state, are perfectly fine (except, of course, for adjustments due to a bad market).

They are well funded, but could be better if the municipalities would have paid their fair share, too. Where they haven’t, there are problems, but nothing like the state. And even there I find fault with government because they still spend. They just seem to like to demonize employees because it has been bash employees for too long now and a gullible public will see us as the cause of the problems.

They don’t realize that nothing is going to change and that all this taxpayer money allegedly to be saved will never, ever see the inside of the public’s pockets.

So recently businesses and civic groups have put out an ad where an unseen person demands \$857 a year for 35 years from a mother holding her child at the front door. But the “gag” is that the person, after the mom says they can’t afford it, says “I wasn’t talking to you” while the camera zooms in on the kid’s face. Trying to scare the public that your kids will have to pay, pay, and then pay some more. Nice, eh? Bunch of rats, I say.

The media looks at the ads by the teachers and other workers and seems to see that workers are fearful of losing their pensions. I’m sure the owner of the press don’t want to lose their mojo, either. You think they would understand this issue. But they don’t seem to, or won’t let on that they do.

So now some in the press say that the rhetoric, scary money tactics and special interest stuff must stop and we all must work together to solve this crisis. Blaming each other must stop. They really think that these changes proposed in Springfield are only for “future” employees. Can you spell n-a-ï-v-e? One these erring politicians get their six-fingers on our pensions, it won’t be long where it will filter down to those working now, and not just future employees.

The battle is not over and compromising without assurances just plays into the hands of those who would dismantle your pensions for political gain.

Recently, MAP sent a contingent of our members to Springfield with thousands of others to protest in solidarity over the erosion of our benefits. Unions and pension boards are willing to sit and talk but the dialogue has to be productive and not one way.

Until that happens and the “scary masks” come off, keep attending rallies and letting your representatives know how you feel about them messing with your future.

Stay safe.

Vita e Bella