

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Pensions in the press—again

I no sooner posted my last Opinion Piece on our website in early November when a few days later, a story appeared in an area newspaper. It asked the question if pension ads tell the real story.

As you may have noted in my early article, I said pretty much the same thing. The press article goes in much more detail and generally tells a straight story of the emotional and poignant ads that try to spin their point of view that goes from the employees are the problem to the politicians are the problem.

I'm on the side of the employees, in that everything wrong with pensions is the fault of the mayors, legislators, and governors. We kept our promise, they didn't. We paid. They diverted. We believed them. They lied to us.

To add to that disgust, they continue to demonize government workers to the public, trying their all to dismantle, disrupt, and if they can, destroy our pensions. They say that our pensions are unsustainable. Illinois is broke, public employers are the cause of government bloat and big spending. Try running a government without public employees. Can't do it. So is bloat a reason to screw you out of your pension?

A pension is a form of reimbursement and a benefit that is as historical as politicians getting elected. Pensions are also our social security, because most of us do not get that benefit. Pensions are tried and true, and keep good employees working for their employers for less pay and benefits that is usually seen in the private sector.

But because the private sector is in the pits, government says it's time to take out their political shovels and throw dirt on cops, firemen, and teachers in the hopes they can steal our money to pay for their past mistakes.

It's all so disillusioning and outright disgusting. In the aforementioned story as related by government groups, it's reported that retirement plans are in debt over \$140 million. The actual figures as pointed out by the press is \$85 million. Still a huge number, but did it need to be inflated by civic organizations and government by \$55 million? That's why you can't believe these people. Who figures out these numbers? Whose agenda are they serving?

They also showed average pensions for retired teachers, public employees, judges, legislators, and others. Guess who came up short on pensions? Yes, you are right, grasshopper—public employees with \$27,792. Try to live off that. Teachers were one notch above the public employees. So much for fat-cat workers.

Legislators, however, in retirement average just below \$50,000. Numbers can still tell a story. But only if there is some honesty involved. Government throws out some big numbers and lies

about it if it serves their purpose. You have to scapegoat public workers and stigmatize them to win over a gullible public. As you can all read, politicians, mayors, and civic groups do a great job at this.

Oh well, it's a fight that we will keep on fighting. Maybe the press is starting to get it, because some of them are actually calling for compromise. We shall see.

Some good news—Ohio labor and the people overwhelmingly recalled Governor Kasich's union rights stripping Issue #2 legislation on November 8th. By a 2 to 1 majority, labor kicked his butt. Collective bargaining is still thriving in Ohio.

We have to do this here in Illinois when it becomes necessary. A big win for labor. But I hear Kasich is biding his time to introduce parts of his defeated legislature next year and afterwards until he gets it all back. Can't trust a lot of politicians. They just bide their time and hope you are not paying attention.

Why won't they all just crawl back under their rocks and let us all be?

But for now, kick back, enjoy your favorite Thanksgiving meal, a bottle of fine wine, and watch some football.

Happy Turkey Day.

Vita e Bella