

A Few Minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Did Christmas come early?

We sure do hope so! On November 21, 2014, Sangamon County circuit court Judge John Belz ruled that our lame duck governor, Pat Quinn, and his cabal's 2013 pension legislation was ruled unconstitutional.

In his multiple page ruling the judge said, "The Act (or legislation) without question diminishes and impairs the benefits of membership in state retirement systems." This protection of (our) pensions is "absolute and without exception."

So in sum, whatever your pension rights were when you started your career are in force until the day you no longer walk this earth. And that's the way it should be. Makes us all kind of happy, doesn't it?

Well, yeah, but...and the "big but" here is that Lisa Madigan of the AG's office is going to appeal the case for Quinn and his ilk to the Illinois State Supreme Court.

The press is sad but happy now that the Madigans, er, sorry, Lisa Madigan, will take the issue to our highest state court.

The press says that's best for taxpayers. Forget us, we aren't important.

What is important is that the state argues that the state's \$200 billion in public debt and \$100 billion in pension obligations (it goes up every time they write an article, as if upping the amount will convince us all that the sky is falling) is cause to reverse Judge Belz's ruling.

Oh wow, here is another story in the same paper where they claim the unfunded liability is \$104.6 billion. Within 20 pages the amount went up \$4.6 billion. Are we really scared now?

Anyhow, the politicians and the press want the law reversed in their favor due to, they claim, our state's "sovereign emergency and police power." In other words, the state's in trouble and they are the boss, and so they have the power to change the constitution.

Never mind that the reason they can't pay is because they diverted their fiscal responsibilities for so long. Judge Belz didn't buy it then, and we hope that the Illinois Supreme Court doesn't either as they review the case.

So now the AG's office is asking for an expedited review and they are seeking guidelines as to what the justices suggest they can do to implement change in the pension issues if the appeal falls flat.

My, my, my, now they want the court to act as "activists" to show them the way. Sort of like a get out of jail free card. What gall.

Justices are supposed to rule on law, not make it. And the courts know this and realize that they are not obligated to support alternative strategies.

So while Christmas seems to come early, we may have to actually wait until the actual holiday before we can enjoy our presents.

Let's trust that yes, Virginia, there really is a Santa Clause and this Christmas gift is real.

Vita é bella