

A Few Minutes with the Boss

By: Joe Andalina

Yes, Santa comes in May, too.

Well, he does and he came as a Sangamon County Judge whose name is Jon Belz.

Judge Belz recently issued an order to stop the pension law that reduces retiree benefits and increasing their contributions from taking effect on June 1st. All of us involved in labor are pleased with the judge's decision. I bet the crafters of this legislation, Nekritz, Madigan, Quinn, and others are silently seething even though they probably expected this would happen.

After all, a bill to overturn a section of the Illinois Constitution that absolutely guarantees pension and retirement benefits to public sector workers and employees is destined to climb through the Illinois court system with a final decision to be ultimately made by the Illinois Supreme Court. How fast it gets there and a decision is pondered or given is anyone's guess. But until it does, state retirees do not have to worry about the decomposition of their benefits.

It also puts a virtual stay on mayors' leagues in DuPage County and others in Illinois from pushing the Illinois legislature in crafting similar language in a bill that would diminish pensions and retirement benefits for municipal and county workers, too. (But then one never knows what goes on behind closed doors with our legislators.)

And as I have written ad-nauseum they are trying and pushing the politicians to do just that—now.

But politicians being politicians know with the 2014 general elections right around the corner realize that might not go over very well with many of their first responder constituents in the police and fire services that reside on their districts.

That, and the fact that a court-ordered stay has been issued on the original bum law makes it a common sense no brainer to take no action until the aforementioned original law is adjudicated by the Illinois Supreme Court.

So it's a welcome step at this point in time and we can only hope that the jurists in the Supreme Court will find for employees who have abided by the rules, paid their contributions, and are expected to be provided with the benefits guaranteed by the Illinois Constitution and as promised by their employer.

Stay tuned.

Vita é Bella.