



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Mayors Testify in Support of Pension Relief for Taxpayers**

Mayors representing Rockford and the Chicago suburbs testified in the House Personnel and Pensions Committee on Thursday about the need for taxpayer relief from growing public safety pension contributions during a hearing for House Bill 308 (Rep. Maurice West).

Representative West, while introducing his legislation to extend the deadline to reach a 90% funded level for downstate and suburban police and firefighter pension funds from the current 2040 to 2050, noted this bill was a “short-term solution” and was part of his commitment to “work on true pension reforms”.

Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara noted that his city’s required public safety pension contributions rose from \$9 million in 2013 to \$22 million in 2022, with a projected payment of \$39 million in 2040. Mayor McNamara stated this situation was “not sustainable for the taxpayers of Rockford” and noted that \$22 million was the equivalent of 220 police officers or firefighters.

Deerfield Mayor Dan Shapiro, who serves as Vice-President of the Northwest Municipal Conference, noted that “Extending the amortization schedule will give time for Illinois communities to fully experience the consolidation benefits projected by the 2019 pension fund investment consolidation legislation.”

Richton Park Village President Rick Reinbold, who serves as Legislative Chair for the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, highlighted the struggles local leaders face with meeting growing pension contributions. He noted that many south suburban communities are “historically resource-strapped and struggle to operate within their means. Without a diverse tax base to draw upon—and with escalating pension costs— they are already hard pressed to not fall behind in adequately funding retirements for public safety personnel.” President Reinbold added that “Extending the amortization schedule of downstate public safety pension funds to 2050 would ensure municipalities across the state are able to meet their pension obligations.”

Representatives of the Illinois Municipal League (IML) pointed out that police and firefighter pensions have the shortest amortization deadline (2040) of all state-authorized pension funds, and that for “some communities, 100% of the property tax levy goes into the pension funds to meet these obligations. House Bill 308 would provide immediate relief.”

A representative of the Associated Firefighters of Illinois stated their opposition to the bill since it defers part of the financial obligation beyond 2040.

Mayor Shapiro noted that the NWMC “does not offer our support for reamortization lightly” and that while “we have several communities taking proactive action to address future pension payments, there are many others that need relief as the system waits to realize the benefit of investment consolidation,”

Because it was a subject matter hearing, House Bill 308 was not called for a vote.

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