



Illinois Retired Teachers Endorse Senator Bill Haine

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The Illinois Retired Teachers Association today announced its endorsement of Senator Bill Haine, D-Alton, in the all-important November 6 general election.

The IRTA, which represents thousands of retired educators throughout Illinois, said Senator Haine's commitment to concerns of retired teachers exemplifies his commitment to education.

IRTA Executive Director Jim Bachman called on IRTA members in the 56th Senate District to give their support to Senator Haine, who understands the needs and values of retired teachers.

"This is potentially the most important election of our lifetime," Bachman said. "The new General Assembly, when it convenes in January, will take up the vital concerns of teacher pensions and health care. Senator Haine has consistently shown his understanding of the mutual commitment between teachers and the State of Illinois."

Bachman said Senator Haine has been a staunch supporter of retiree rights and has fought to keep Illinois competitive in the race to hire the best teachers available.

"We can't recruit the best educators unless we assure them they will have security in their retirement years," Bachman said. "And by demonstrating his commitment to today's retired teachers, Bill Haine shows his obligation to the educational needs of future generations."

"After interviewing the candidates and consulting with our local members, the IRTAPAC Board of Directors decided our endorsement of Senator Haine was clear-cut. The stakes are high for our members and we encourage all retired teachers to tell their family and friends to support Senator Bill Haine because he understands our positions."

Among the questions posed to legislative candidates included their position on continuing state funding at \$85 million annually for the Teachers Retirement Insurance Plan. The state subsidy provides approximately 25 percent of the premiums for retired teachers. Earlier this year Governor Quinn proposed the elimination of the subsidy, which would cause serious financial hardship for many of the 65,000 retired teachers enrolled in TRIP.

Candidates were also judged on their response to questions involving the continuation of their 3 percent Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) and the possibility of forfeiting the COLA in return for health insurance considerations.

Bachman said the state's Constitution is very clear in prohibiting the diminishment of pension benefits for teachers.

“Our members followed the rules throughout their careers of teaching the children of Illinois,” Bachman said. “We can't allow those to be changed unilaterally and without consideration of the financial and health care needs of our members.”