

Gov. Pritzker Signs Firefighter's Pensions Reform Legislation Codifying Benefits

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SPRINGFIELD - Building on efforts to protect Illinois' first responders and frontline workers, Governor JB Pritzker today signed legislation that codifies longstanding

benefits in the Chicago firefighter pensions system. House Bill 2451 ensures firefighters are treated fairly by fulfilling promises made to firefighter pensioners.

“I’ve always believed that hardworking men and women who have earned their pension shouldn’t pay the price for local or state budget challenges,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “HB 2451 creates a system that gives all firefighters certainty and fair treatment. And to make sure that the city can meet its obligations, my administration is working to sell the James R. Thompson Center, which will return to the city’s property tax rolls and is projected to generate \$45 million annually for the city and its sister agencies.”

“By signing this bill, Gov. Pritzker has once again demonstrated his commitment to fiscal responsibility and protecting future generations of middle class Chicagoans from massive tax increases,” **said State Senator Robert Martwick (D-Chicago)**. “If we ever hope to right our financial ship, we must finally put an end to the irresponsible behavior that put us here in the first place. This law simply ensures that the city confronts the true costs of its pension obligations and makes the difficult decisions it needs to make today.”

HB 2451 addresses disparate pension benefits among Chicago firefighters. Currently, employees eligible for a pension in the Firemen’s Annuity and Benefit Fund of Chicago (FABF) who were born after January 1, 1966 are granted a 1.5 percent COLA. However, firefighters who may have started on the force the same day, may unfairly receive different benefits based on their dates of birth. The legislation addresses this discrepancy by adjusting the COLA for these firefighters from 1.5 percent to 3 percent.

The legislation eliminates the 30 percent cap on cumulative COLA adjustments. For employees eligible for a 1.5 percent COLA, they would have hit the cap at 20 years. The reforms made in this legislation provides firefighters the ability to plan for themselves and their families.

HB 2451 is effective immediately.

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