

Retired Teachers Association of Chicago

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Dear RTAC Member,

Our successor colleagues' recently concluded strike reminds us of the hard won battles we undertook and won to secure union representation and address our professional concerns during the past 45+ years. **Now we must revive our pro-active stance to address two serious issues.**

1) We must VOTE 'NO' on Amendment #49 which will appear on our November 6, 2012 Election ballots. We must all commit to convincing friends, neighbors, and relatives in Illinois to 'VOTE NO' to defeat Amendment #49. If this amendment becomes part of Illinois' Constitution it will negatively impact over 8,000+ school and other municipal districts (police, fire, public service employees, and teachers) in Chicago and throughout Illinois. Instead of a simple majority, Amendment #49 will require a 3/5ths majority in both houses of the Illinois Legislature or other benefit-granting entities to award a benefit to any public employee. **This will make any change to pension or other benefit laws very difficult to enact . . . forever.** The exact wording of the proposed Amendment will be on the November 6, 2012 ballot. However, one can read it now at the internet site ILGA.gov as "Constitutional Amendment #49." If each of us can persuade ten other people or more to **'VOTE NO' to Amendment #49, we will defeat it together. Please write persuasive letters to the media outlets and talk to people in your communities. We owe this to ourselves and all other public employees who have dedicated their lives to the public good.** Early voting in Illinois begins on Monday, October 22, 2012.

2) Our Illinois legislators have failed to take appropriate and equitable action to correct the abuses and inequities which have caused a serious under funding of our Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund. As of June 30, 2012, the Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund, Illinois' oldest pension fund, declined to a 59% funding ratio from its previous 100% funding ratio. Illinois State legislators enabled the Chicago Board of Education to forgo its contributions to the Chicago Teachers' Pension Fund from 1995 through 2005. In 2010, the Illinois legislature passed P.A. 96-0889 which enabled the Chicago Board of Education to take a three year 'pension holiday'. The legislature's actions combined with an increasing number of retirees plus the severe economic downturn created the drastic shortfall which impairs our fund going forward. Our serious crisis needs to be publicized and remediated. **We urge you to write to the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun Times*, and your local media to demand that our public officials take corrective action at the state and local levels to fulfill their obligations to provide the promised pensions to which we contributed throughout our careers.** It is imperative that you contact your legislators in person, by phone, and/or by letter to insist that they take action by creating and passing the necessary legislation to restore our pension fund's viability. We fulfilled our commitment to teach Chicago's youth and make their future endeavors possible. Now the legislators, Chicago Board of Education, and Mayor Rahm Emanuel must fulfill their responsibilities to us. We must take strong collective action now to stop the assault on our pensions and our future well being.

Sincerely,

Marcella L. Morrison, RTAC President

Arlene R. Crandall, RTAC Executive Director