

June 09, 2014

To the Honorable Members of the 98th General Assembly:

After conducting a comprehensive and thorough review of this legislation, I hereby sign Senate Bill 1922, which will stabilize the City of Chicago's pension funds for laborers and municipal workers. This legislation includes much-needed reforms that will help secure Chicago's financial future.

While I am committed to the public pension reforms embodied in Senate Bill 1922, I was dismayed by the ill-advised attempt to have the Illinois General Assembly impose a property tax increase on the people of Chicago as part of this legislation.

I publicly stated that this backdoor approach was wrong and I would not approve it.

Officials of local government units in Illinois should determine their own fiscal and revenue policies in order to be directly accountable to their constituents.

It should be noted that Senate Bill 1922 was subsequently amended at my insistence to remove the legislatively-mandated property tax increase, which I strongly oppose.

I am encouraged by the public support for my position and the public opposition to automatic reliance on the property tax to solve the fiscal problems of the City of Chicago.

As the Mayor and members of the Chicago City Council work to identify savings to meet their obligations under Senate Bill 1922, I urge them to rule out a property tax increase on Chicago homeowners and businesses.

I recognize that Chicago's mission to find real solutions to its financial challenges will not be easy. It will require hard work, creative solutions and difficult decisions, just as it did last year when we held the line and achieved comprehensive pension reform for the State of Illinois.

I strongly urge the Mayor and City Council to follow our lead and identify a comprehensive, balanced solution to Chicago's pension crisis. Chicago's finances can and should be set on the track to long-term stability in a way that does not hit homeowners the hardest.

Sincerely,

PAT QUINN
Governor