

TUA NEWS RELEASE

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ILLINOIS TOLLWAY TROLLS RAKING IN LAVISH SALARIES AND PENSIONS

“Almost doubling cash tolls on the Illinois Tollway system cannot be justified under any circumstances,” testified Christina Tobin, Vice President of Taxpayers United of Illinois (TUA), speaking at the tollway public hearing held in Schaumburg on Tuesday. “While we suffer through the worst recession since the Great Depression, drivers will pay more to funnel cash into the pockets of well-connected contractors, big engineering companies, and excessive salaries and benefits of Tollway administrators.”

Tobin released a list of the State Toll Highway Authority’s Top 100 Salaries. The list was distributed at the hearing and will be released to the general public today.

Salary information obtained from the tollway shows that the 100 highest-paid employees—mainly administrators, managers, and engineers—have a median income of about \$100,000 per year, ranging from \$84,547 to Chief Engineer Paul D. Kovacs, Jr’s salary of \$163,812. Executive Director and tollway-tax hike enthusiast Kristi LaFleur—a Gov. Pat Quinn (D) appointee—pulls in \$119,445. Salaries are funded by tolls.

After retirement, however, tollway employees receive millions of dollars in pensions from state tax funds through the State Employee Retirement System (SERS). High tolls support high salaries, which bloat the multi-million dollar retirement packages. And what’s more, Tollway employees aren’t required to pay tolls!

The highest estimated lifetime pension payout among Tollway employees is \$3.3 million for Chief Engineer Kovacs. Two others—General Counsel Thomas Bamonte and Chief of Finance Michael Colsch—also have estimated pension payouts exceeding \$3 million, while Kristi LaFleur can expect to rake in \$2.4 million after retirement. Even the lowest paid of the Top 100—Special Project Manager Herbert Savage, Jr.—will receive \$1.7 million in taxpayer-funded pension benefits.

“The 67 percent increase in the state personal income tax passed by Springfield Democrats will go in its entirety to the stretched-thin, unstable state government pension programs,” said Tobin. “Thus, Illinois taxpayers will be funding the lavish, gold-plated pensions of tollway bureaucrats and employees when they retire.”

Founded in 1976, TUA is one of the largest taxpayer organizations in America.

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