TUA NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2011

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GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE PENSIONS MORE GENEROUS

A recent article from Reuters ("The unsustainability of public pensions," Sept. 2) states that government employees "have a strong argument that they have earned their pensions. But they have a weak argument asking taxpayers to pay additional taxes to make up shortfalls in pension plans."

The article goes on to say that the average public pension payment is less than $30,000 per year according to the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), but admits that it is much higher than the average Social Security benefit of $14,172 per year.

These figures, while presumably true, are somewhat misleading. Compared with workers in the private sector, government employees, when retired, get more rewards for less time put in.

• State government retirees who were members of SEIU average only 24 years worked before receiving pensions…a partial career compared with private sector workers. A person in the private sector who graduates from college at 22 and works until early retirement works a total of 40 years.

• To get their $30,000 pension these retired SEIU employees contributed an average of only $35,000 in their entire career, and they get cost-of-living increases added to their pensions each year.

• In addition, these retired government employees also get Social Security.

• Government school teachers also are part-time employees, working only about 9 months or 170 days a year (34 weeks).

• The average teacher works 25 years, retires at age 58, and gets a pension of $46,000. If these teachers were in Social Security and retired at 62 at the same salary, their pension (Social Security) would be $12,000.

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

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