

# TUA NEWS RELEASE

## TAXPAYERS UNITED OF AMERICA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Former Gov. Jim Edgar Thrives While Taxpayers Toil

“Jim Edgar is probably the most respected Illinois governor in recent memory. Of course, since three of the past six (and four of the last nine) have gone to jail, that’s admittedly not a very high bar to clear. Somewhat like being the tallest midget in the circus.” – Eric Kohn, Editor-in-Chief, [Illinois Mirror](#)

Chicago — Former Gov. Jim Edgar (R), with the complicity of local media, cultivated a “Mr. Clean” image as he raked in huge amounts of cash with his state pension, as University professor, as insurance company director, and affiliation with a company that preys on Illinois’ catastrophic financial condition.

“As Governor, Edgar raised the state income tax in 1991 and 1993,” said Jim Tobin, President of Taxpayers United of America (TUA). “He later ‘ran against’ the proposed 1994 income tax hike endorsed by notorious tax-raiser, State Senator Dawn Clark Netsch (D), but in 1996 he endorsed this income tax-hike proposal, which was approved by the state House. I was the only person to testify against this twenty-five percent personal income tax hike, and fortunately, the [legislation](#) was killed in the State Revenue Committee on May 30, 1997.”

Edgar has a long history of fleecing taxpayers while maintaining a favorable public image.

Edgar, for 20 years of government employment, collected an [annual pension of \\$156,331](#) as of 2016. He began collecting his pension in 2001 at age 55. He also was paid, in 2015, [\\$71,760](#) to be “Distinguished Fellow” at the University of Illinois’ Institute of Government & Public Affairs.

The [Chicago Sun-Times](#) also reported last week that “Edgar is chairman of the board of Illinois Financing Partners, which on Wednesday won the Rauner administration’s OK to advance money to vendors that have been forced to wait months to get paid by the state. The payoff for the Edgar company? It gets to keep the late-payment fees when the state finally pays up.”

The *Sun-Times* noted that the “company’s vice chairman is another former politician — ex-U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello, a downstate Democrat who’s now a lobbyist in Springfield and Washington. Edgar says he gets an undisclosed monthly stipend from the company. He and Costello also each have a 1 percent stake in it, records show.”

Brittany Clingen, Senior Correspondent for *Illinois Mirror*, followed up this week by highlighting Edgar’s [enduring cronyism](#).

“After vacating the governor’s mansion in January 1999, he became a board member of Kemper Insurance Company in February of the same year. His four-year tenure on the board paid off, literally; reports put his compensation at no less than [\\$83,000 in 2000](#) and as high as [\\$142,702 in 2002](#), \$16,000 more than the \$126,590 he made his final year as governor. According to [an article](#) by *Crain’s Chicago Business*, Edgar said his compensation was ‘about \$65,000 a year, with another \$30,000 in profit-sharing paid most years.’ Edgar started in his position as a board member of Kemper Insurance less than two months after [signing a bill](#) sought by the company. The bill permitted mutual insurance companies in Illinois to convert to mutual insurance holding companies (MIHC) and issue stock.”

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“As we have noted [previously](#), Edgar is constantly trotted out as a veteran statesman, however, he serves the interests of political bosses and government cronies while bilking the taxpayers of Illinois,” said Tobin. “His advice is toxic and should be avoided as such.”

Concludes [Kohn](#), “So, when it comes to what Illinois should do going forward, perhaps it’s time to stop looking to Jim Edgar for his thoughts. He should be taken as seriously as Scientology. He wasn’t that great, and it’s high time that a state mired in the mistakes of the past stopped caring about what he says, thinks, and does.”