

# TUA NEWS RELEASE

## TAXPAYERS UNITED OF AMERICA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## COOK CO. SODA TAX WOULD SUBSIDIZE LAVISH, GOLD-PLATED PENSIONS OF RETIRED COOK CO. POLITICIANS AND BUREAUCRATS

The Director of Outreach of Taxpayers United of America (TUA), today urged Cook County Commissioners to repeal the “soda” tax, saying most of the funds from the regressive tax would subsidize the already “lavish, gold-plated pensions” of retired county politicians and bureaucrats.

On November 10, 2016, the Cook County Board of Commissioners passed the “Cook County Sweetened Beverage Tax Ordinance.” The tax imposed is a one-cent-per-ounce on the retail sale of all sweetened beverages in Cook County.

“As of 2013, 276 Cook County pensioners were getting over \$100,000 in annual pension payments,” said Val Zimnicki. “The average retirement age of these 276 retirees is only about 60, with an average estimated lifetime payout of \$4.7 million.”

“I wish I could give you figures updated as of today, but the Cook County Board has been stonewalling us, and has not responded to our Freedom of Information request.”

“Cook County has some of the highest property taxes in the country and government salaries and pensions are the reason. Most of county spending is for salaries and benefits of the government employees. Furthermore, Cook County politician’s taxpayers elected have failed to reform the very system that siphons away our wealth for their own benefit.”

“Our 2013 study revealed some alarming figures.”

Click [Here](#) to view the Top 200 Government Pensions as of 4/1/13.

**“Alon Winnie collected a taxpayer-funded annual pension of \$330,323 and will accumulate a stunning \$4,698,522 in lifetime pension payments. \*”**

**“John Barrett had an annual pension of \$321,854. Having retired at only 58 years of age, he will enjoy a staggering estimated lifetime payout of \$10,037,135. His contribution of the estimated lifetime payout would be only 3.8%. \* ”**

**“James Stone, who retired at age 55, will collect at least \$10 million in total estimated lifetime benefits.” \***

**“Roxanne Roberts, who retired at age 57, also will collect at least \$10 million in total estimated lifetime benefits.” \***

“It’s mathematically impossible to tax your way out of this problem. Illinois has more than 17,000 retirees collecting more than \$100,000 pensions each year. Government pensions must be cut or the system will collapse.”

To see all 276 Cook County pensions visit our web site at [taxpayersunitedofamerica.org](http://taxpayersunitedofamerica.org).

\*Lifetime estimated pension payout includes 3% compounded COLA and assumes life expectancy of 85 (IRS Form 590).