

TUA NEWS RELEASE

TAXPAYERS UNITED OF AMERICA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 11, 2012

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Tallahassee Hides Stunning Government Pension Payments from Taxpayers

Tallahassee—[Taxpayers United of America](http://www.taxpayersunited.org) (TUA) released estimated pension payouts for Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida State, University of Florida government employees and Leon County government teachers. Florida refuses to release actual government pensions, ignoring citizens' right to review all payments funded by taxes. TUA calculated estimated pensions for government employees based on actual salaries of current government employees to shed light on the largess of the tightly guarded secret payouts.

"Florida lawmakers have been trying to undo the damage of administrations past, that have made budget-crushing deals with union bosses whose only concern is their own job security," stated Rae Ann McNeilly, Director of Outreach for TUA.

"But despite efforts to reform the pension system, it seems that government officials are still willing to protect the system by keeping it hidden from review. The costs of shielding the system from review, and ultimately, reform, are devastatingly high as cities around the country are buckling under the weight of their unfunded liabilities. Pension funds are the number one budgetary problem in the country and Florida is no different."

"While residents across Florida face crushing taxes, falling home values, high unemployment, and, at least according to some, another recession, government employees continue to receive stunning pensions entirely funded by taxpayers who will never collect more than about \$22,000 a year from Social Security."

"As long as Florida shields its pension payments from taxpayer review and uses grossly overstated actuarial calculations, the Florida pension system remains a ticking time bomb. The purpose of our study is to put some perspective around individual pensions, to put them in terms to which the average taxpayer can relate."

McNeilly continued, "For example, **Mark Bleiweis**, a University of Florida employee, stands to collect an estimated annual pension of **\$495,343*** based on his actual annual gross of \$884,541. His estimated lifetime pension payout could be a staggering **\$16,172,944.***"

"**Herbert Thiele**, county attorney, has an estimated annual pension of **\$128,208***, based on his actual annual gross of \$228,943, with an estimated lifetime payout of **\$4,160,361*.**"

"Florida State Department of Education employee, **Frank Brogan**, has a lifetime estimated payout of **\$3,861,549*** with an estimated annual pension of **\$119,000***, based on his actual annual gross of \$212,500."

"Florida's government pension systems are crushing middle class Floridians. [Replacing defined benefit pensions for all new government hires with social security and 401\(k\)s would eventually eliminate unfunded government pensions.](#) Current government employees must consider a voluntary pension contribution of up to 10% to preserve their pension benefits. Additionally, all members should pay for 50% of their healthcare premiums. **We need a stable system that is fair to both taxpayers and beneficiaries or pension checks will stop coming,**" added McNeilly.

*TUA submits FOIA requests for current employee salaries and estimates pensions based on the current pension laws. COLA average of 3% per year worked, uses 23 years of pension payments based on IRS form 590 LE of 85. Assumes employee worked 35 years and retired at age 62. No personal information is provided so calculations are accurate based on the necessary assumptions.

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

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