

TUA NEWS RELEASE

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Springfield Pols to Vote on Cigarette Tax Hike Impacting Poor As They Look Forward to Lavish, Gold-Plated Pensions

SPRINGFIELD--A report released today by Taxpayers United of America (TUA) shows that former members of the Illinois General Assembly are now enjoying lavish, gold-plated, million-dollar pensions that they authorized, and that some retired legislators already have collected over a million dollars in pension payments.

[Click here to view the top 100 pensions in the General Assembly Retirement System \(GARS\).](#)

“Our list of the ‘Top 100’ pensions of the General Assembly Retirement System (GARS) is topped by **Arthur Berman**, author of the infamous ‘Berman Tax Increase Amendment’ to the Illinois Constitution,” said Jim Tobin, TUA President. “Berman receives (as of 4/1/12) an annual pension of \$209,531. That’s \$17,461 a month. So far, Berman’s total pension paid to date is **\$1,837,857.**”

“Number two on the list is **Edward Petka**, who receives an annual pension of \$166,119, and whose total pension paid to date is **\$359,844.**”

“Two king-size tax-raisers are on the list, one a former governor and the other a former legislator and governor. Former governor **James R. ‘Big Jim’ Thompson** receives an pension of \$10,919 a month, and his total pension paid to date is a mind-boggling **\$2.1 million.**”

“Former governor and legislator, **Jim Edgar**, receives an annual pension of \$138,898, and his total pension paid to date is a sumptuous **\$1,287,026.** He also gets \$176,000 from the University of Illinois as a ‘distinguished scholar.’ I wonder how many hours a week he works for his 176 grand.”

“It’s no wonder that Illinois’ government pensions funds are finding themselves under water, and that all of the recent temporary 67% increase in the state personal income tax is being funneled into the state government pension funds.”

“It’s ironic that while members of the state legislature are looking forward to a cushy retirement, House members are considering raising the state’s regressive cigarette tax by a huge \$1.00 a pack. This proposed tax hike is a job-killer. It will drive many small shops out of business and will impact the poor most of all. The black market for cigarettes will keep growing. And small shops near the state border that are dependent on cigarette sales might as well just close their doors as smokers drive out of state to purchase cigarettes.