

August 26, 2015

To the Honorable Members of
The Illinois Senate,
99th General Assembly:

Today I veto Senate Bill 763 from the 99th General Assembly, which would amend the Illinois Pension Code to create pension liability for police officers and firefighters at the local level by circumventing local voter choice expressed through a referendum.

Public safety workers put their lives in danger to protect our citizens. They deserve the right to earn good pension benefits. Current law already provides such pensions to local police officers and firefighters in municipalities with the population of at least 5,000 people. And even municipalities with fewer than 5,000 residents can opt, through a referendum, to extend pension benefits to public safety employees. The referendum option gives voters the control of what benefits the municipality can actually afford. That is as it should be.

Senate Bill 763 would take this choice away from the voters and instead allow a municipality to impose new pension obligations by a resolution of its governing body. At a time when local governments in Illinois are struggling to make ends meet, we should not remove local voter control over decisions for which the same voters will have to pay through higher property and other taxes.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 9(b) of Article IV of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return Senate Bill 763 entitled "AN ACT concerning public employee benefits", with the foregoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

Bruce Rauner
GOVERNOR