



Press Release

Date: November 3, 2010

Re: **Willowbrook Voters Urge Illinois General Assembly to Act on Public Safety Pension Reform to Relieve Taxpayers**

Willowbrook voters strongly support immediate legislative action to curb rising public safety pension costs

Willowbrook voters expressed overwhelming support in Tuesday's election for immediate, meaningful public safety pension reform. More than 84% of voters in Willowbrook responded "Yes," to an advisory referendum asking constituents if the General Assembly and Governor should enact meaningful pension reform to protect taxpayers from the burden of rising public safety employee pension costs.

A sizeable majority of voters in the 45 communities in which the referendum appeared on election ballots voted in favor of immediate police and fire pension reforms. This referendum follows the passage earlier this year of similar pension reforms for all other public employees.

"Increased police pension obligations, due in large part to pension plan enhancements passed down by the state, are crippling our communities," said Village President Robert Napoli. "Our taxpayers can no longer foot this bill, especially at a time when many citizens can't even afford to put into their own retirement funds. We want to provide our police officers with reliable and secure retirements, but our funding obligations must be reasonable. Unless we reform the system to curb escalating pension costs, our Village cannot continue to obligate such a large portion of our budget to satisfy these pension costs."

"The General Assembly needs to finish the job that it started and also reform pensions for public safety employees during the upcoming veto session," President Napoli added.

As it currently stands, the pension payout structure for police employees in Willowbrook is unsustainable. Police employees can retire as early as age 50 after 30 years of service, with a pension of 75 percent of their final pay rate despite only contributing one-third of the cost of their pension. For example, a police officer who has contributed roughly \$300,000 to his or her pension over a 30-year career can feasibly draw nearly \$7.5 million in pension benefits in 30 years of retirement.

The Village of Willowbrook, along with the Pension Fairness for Illinois Communities Coalition, is calling on lawmakers to make public safety pension reform a top legislative priority in the November veto session. The Coalition, which represents more than 200 communities, including Willowbrook, was established as a statewide effort to develop a lasting solution to the pension crisis that protects Illinois taxpayers and communities, while ensuring sustainable retirement benefits for public safety employees.

For more information, please visit: www.pensionfairness.org