



## State Universities Annuitants Association

### 2025 SUAA Legislative Platform

The SUAA legislative platform serves as a guideline for the Association's position on legislation affecting pensions, health insurance, and other retirement benefits for SURS participants, plus the viability of the state's higher education system.

Through its Board of Directors and House of Delegates, SUAA will review and evaluate proposed initiatives and legislation that may affect SURS annuitants to determine their compatibility with the Association's goals; and, as appropriate, will publicly support or oppose such initiatives and legislation either in part or in their entirety.

If legislation is enacted that the Association considers to be in violation of the pension protection clause of the Illinois Constitution, SUAA is prepared to challenge it in the courts in concert with coalition partners or independently if necessary.

**The primary legislative goal for 2025 is protecting and enhancing retirement security of all past, present, and future employees of Illinois' public universities, community colleges, and their survivors.**

- SUAA opposes any legislative attempt to amend, modify, or eliminate Article XII, Section 5 of the Illinois State Constitution which states, "*Membership in any pension or retirement system of the State, any unit of local government or school district, or any agency or instrumentality thereof, shall be an enforceable contractual relationship, the benefits of which shall not be diminished or impaired*".
- SUAA supports Governor Pritzker's proposal to have all state pension systems fully funded (100%) by FY 2048.

#### **Legislation Relating to Tier I Annuitants**

- SUAA opposes any legislation that does not provide for a continuation of the compounded annual increment for Tier I annuitants of 3% as is currently set forward in the Tier I plan

#### **Legislation Relating to Tier II Annuitants**

- SUAA supports legislation to modify Tier II pension benefits such that upon retirement Tier II annuitants will receive an adequate pension above the “safe harbor provision” of Social Security. Modifications to be considered include, but are not limited to, the final salary period, time to vesting, automatic annual increment, and early retirement reduction.

### **Legislation Relating to Health Care Benefits**

- SUAA supports legislation that would allow participants in the **Trail** health care program to have a choice regarding the provider of their health care benefits, with 3-5 options desirable.
- SUAA supports legislation to ensure that all public university and community college employees, retirees, and survivors are treated equitably under the State Employees Health Plan and College Insurance Programs.
- SUAA supports full funding for the College Insurance Plan and opposes any reduction in coverage provided by that plan and the withholding of any funds appropriated for payment to retirees or providers.

### **Legislation Relating to All currently employed Annuitants**

- SUAA supports legislation to revise the **Retirement Saving Plan** (Self-Managed Plan) by structuring an optional plan that provides for participation in Social Security or, barring that, makes changes ensuring that the plan meets, at a minimum, the “safe harbor provision” of Social Security.
- SUAA opposes any legislative effort that would have the effect of phasing out the defined benefit retirement plans for higher education personnel or the conversion of a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan.

### **Legislation Relating to the Fiscal Health of Higher Education**

- SUAA supports legislation to provide adequate funding for the State’s universities and community colleges, including the MAP program. Increased support is critical to reversing the declining enrollment trends and providing opportunities for students from low- and moderate-income families to receive a higher education.
- SUAA supports legislative efforts to address the State’s “structural deficit” meaning currently the State’s revenues are inadequate to meet its funding needs. Addressing the “structural deficit” would allow the State to both boost funding for higher education and to provide SURS annuitants with pension adequacy.

### **Federal Legislation**

- SUAA supports the repeal of the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset.