

New Statewide Initiative is an All Out Attack on Public Pensions!

By Mike DeBord

The new State-wide “initiative” (that will soon be circulating around the State gathering petition signatures) will try and **close every single State and local government defined benefit retirement plan** to new employees! The initiative, titled “**Public Employees. Pension and Retiree Healthcare Benefits**” would apply to all cities and counties, school districts, special districts, boards, commissions, universities and State government. If the proponents of this initiative get sufficient signatures by February 8, 2016, **it will be on the November 8, 2016 General Election ballot** as an amendment to the State Constitution.

The proponents of this initiative submitted their proposal to the State Attorney General who is responsible for writing the “Title and Summary” for all initiatives submitted. The Attorney General says in their Summary of this initiative, that the proposal would

- **eliminate Constitutional protections for vested pension and retiree healthcare benefits** for current employees, including those working in K-12 schools, higher education, hospitals, and police protection, for future work performed.
- **add initiative and referendum powers** to the Constitution (so voters could be responsible) **for determining public employee compensation and retirement benefits.**
- **would bar government employers from enrolling new employees in “defined benefit” plans**, or paying more than one-half cost of new employee’s retirement benefits, or enhancing retirement benefits, **unless specifically approved by the voters.**

This initiative would **require thousands of new ballot measures at taxpayer cost** and **close defined benefit retirement plans to new employees even though they have the lowest fees and highest investment returns** compared to other types of plans such as 401(k)’s.

This Initiative is the most serious threat to public pensions ever put forth in California! It creates very burdensome and expensive barriers for local government to continue pensions for their new employees. It also **affects existing workers and can affect current retirees** as existing retirement plans are closed to new employees.

We need your help to try and defeat this initiative which would undermine all public sector workers, including teachers, nurses, police and firefighters. Please **don’t be fooled by the proponents**, and their deep pocket supporters, who use the media very effectively to put out their propaganda. Tell your family and friends **not to sign the petition** for this destructive Initiative!

We will be providing future updates and additional information. **Thank You For Your Help!**