

Change the State Pension System

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Kudos to Gov. Paterson for vetoing the extension of a law to provide more generous pension benefits to police and firefighters than they would otherwise receive upon being hired. This law, which was supposed to be temporary but had been rubber-stamp extended every year since 1981, is just one example of the kind of over-the-top spending that's out of whack with the real world and that the state can no longer afford.

Now we need to keep our eyes on the Legislature to make sure they don't override the governor's veto, a move they could make to stay in the good graces of the powerful police and firefighters unions. We need to send our legislators a strong message that we the voters want - no, we expect - this veto to stand, and if they override it, they'll have to answer to us.

And we need to send Gov. Paterson a strong message that this veto must be just the opening move in a strategy for reforming the state's pension system, a strategy which should include passing a new Tier V with reduced benefits for all future state employees -regardless of the job they hold.