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02/08



Dear AFSCME Retiree:

As a direct result of AFSCME's recent lobbying efforts in the U.S. Congress, millions of retired public employees will be getting a special cash payment from the federal government. Most likely, you're one of them!

The payments are authorized by The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)—also referred to as the “stimulus package”—which President Obama signed into law on February 17. This far-reaching law encompasses many programs and provides a variety of benefits to all Americans.

In addition to a “making work pay” tax credit for workers and their families, the new law provides a one-time payment of \$250 for Social Security beneficiaries and recipients of some other federal benefit programs. But, as you well know, many AFSCME members and other retired public employees don't participate in Social Security.

That's why AFSCME lobbyists in Washington, DC spearheaded a successful campaign to ensure that ALL public retirees get the same economic stimulus payments as Social Security recipients.

Social Security beneficiaries will get their stimulus payment in the form of a check mailed later this year. Originally, Congress said public retirees couldn't get the payment because, unlike Social Security recipients, they don't receive benefit checks from the federal government. **To AFSCME, that seemed very unfair.** So, we convinced Congressional leaders to support an alternative payment system through income tax credits.

AFSCME Illinois Retirees, Chapter 31

TEL (217) 788-2800

615 South Second Street, PO Box 2328 Springfield, Illinois 62705-2328

WEB www.afscme31.org

Because this year's federal income tax forms have already been printed and mailed, the payments for public retirees will be issued in the second year of the economic recovery: 2010.


Thanks to AFSCME's efforts, public retirees who file income taxes in 2010 (for 2009 income) will find a line item on the form, enabling them to claim the economic recovery tax credit. Those **who won't be filing a tax return** can fill out a special form and receive a check, known as a "refundable" tax credit.


Of course, if you do receive Social Security benefits or receive benefits from Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Railroad Retirement or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (as a disability veteran), you can expect to get your check in the mail automatically this spring (beneficiaries have been asked not to contact Social Security unless they do not receive a payment by June 4th).

In all, over 60 million retirement program beneficiaries will receive stimulus payments as a result of President Obama's ARRA. The idea is for everyone to go out and spend their checks in their communities, in order to help reinvigorate our nation's economy.

AFSCME's successful efforts to include public retirees in the economic recovery act is just one example of how AFSCME Retirees works to protect the retirement security of our members -- over 235,000 public sector retirees throughout the United States. You can be proud that as a member of Retirees Chapter 31, you are helping to build such a powerful force for public sector retirees in our nation's capitol.

Sincerely yours,


Virginia Yates
President
Chapter 31


Henry Bayer
Executive Director
Council 31