

## **Initial Richman Initiative Talk Points**

This flawed, unnecessary initiative – written by politicians -- punishes California's teachers, police, nurses and firefighters to try to make up for an economic meltdown and stock market crash brought on by years of abuses on Wall Street. It would do *nothing* to address California's current budget deficit, but would drastically cut already modest retirement benefits for teachers, peace officers, home health care workers and other public employees.

The fact is that seven out of 10 public employees get less than \$30,000 per year in retirement, and most do not receive Social Security. Yet this initiative would cut new teachers' retirement 28% and anyone who wanted to serve Californians by becoming a police officers and firefighters would see their retirement benefits but by 23%.

A school bus driver, custodian, or a librarian who also pays into Social Security would get a 48% cut in their pension despite the fact that under current law the average public employee retirement benefit is about \$2,000 per month after years of service. If this proposal were law today that AVERAGE retirement benefit would be just over \$1,000 per month, barely above the federal poverty level for a family of one. That is simply not enough to live on in California.

The politicians behind this initiative are taking out the economic abuses of mortgage companies and Wall Street brokers on our teachers, nurses, firefighters and other public employees. Pension funds were almost fully funded until the recent stock market crash. Teachers, nurses, firefighters and other public employees should not have their retirements put at risk due to corporate abuses, while those responsible for the crisis receive government bailouts, and corporate executives receive lavish salaries, bonuses and stock options.