

MCALEN AFT NEWS

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BIG MONEY IS TARGETING PENSION

Last year Texas AFT/McAllen AFT and allied groups fended off an attempt by the radical right in the Texas legislature to kill guaranteed pension benefits for Texas school employees. Now they're gearing up to try again in 2013, and this time around there's big money behind the effort.

The up-front advocate so far has been a well-connected Houston attorney named Bill King. But the big-money man behind the attack on state and local pension funds, from California to Texas and beyond, is one John Arnold, a billionaire Houston hedge-fund operator who walked away from

his role as an Enron trader with millions of dollars in bonuses before that notorious company went bankrupt.

Bill King claims he is stepping back from involvement in what he calls "Texans for Public Pension Reform," but just last week he published an opinion piece in the Houston in the Chronicle continuing the assault on public pensions like the one you depend on for retirement security. King, Arnold, and their ilk would have you believe there's a "crisis" in funding for public pensions. But the only real crisis is the one they are creating by

In this issue:

Kill Pension Benefits |

Truth about John Arnold |

Tidbits |

Special points of interest:

Pension Attack

Enron Trader

Texas for Pension

Reform

Elections

Texas Workers

Pledge



TIDBITS

McAllen AFT became a full local in 2005. We had completed the full financial training, organizing preparation, and conducting the business of the local. Ruth Skow is McAllen AFT's first

President. Joe Guerra is the VP, Chris Mills is Treasurer, Torchie Champion-Smith is Secretary, Victor Partida represents members at large, Nidia Canales is the Area Middle School

Director, and Gus Martinez represents our Retiree members. Elections will take place this spring. Voting will be in person at our End of School Event.

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PENSION (continued)

trying to transform guaranteed-benefit pensions into individual retirement accounts— individual accounts that would provide retirees with no assured level of benefits but would provide private investment managers with lucrative opportunities to make a fortune in administrative at taxpayer expense.

The new issue of *Texas Teacher*, Texas AFT’s,

thoroughly refutes the claims made by these corporate enemies of public pensions.

We especially recommend the interview in this issue with pension expert Keith Brainard. “TRS is a bargain for Texas taxpayers,” Brainard says, pointing out that the state’s share of TRS pension costs (state contribution rate) is the lowest of any state teacher plan in the pension costs (state contribu-

tion rate) is the lowest of any state teacher plan in the United States whose members do not participate in Social Security. If Texas switched from the current guaranteed pension based on pooled investments to individual retirement accounts, “the result would be higher costs, paid from teachers’ retirement accounts,” Brainard adds.



THEIR FUTURE OUR FIGHT!

Pledge web site (below)

http://act.aflcio.org/c/256/p/dial/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=3422

TEXAS WORKERS PLEDGE

The attacks on teachers, firefighters, nurses and other dedicated public employees in Wisconsin, Ohio, and Indiana are coming to Texas.

Some very rich individuals who want even more wealth, such as the Koch brothers, have financed national attacks on public-sector as well as private-sector union members. These business interests want to end traditional pension systems as we know them and convert them to riskier 401(k)-style accounts that would benefit the financial industry, not workers. And that’s just for starters. Take The Pledge to Protect Your Pension!!

I PLEDGE...

- To vote for candidates who will pass laws to protect my job, salary, health care and other benefits and my family’s economic well-being.
- To volunteer in 2012 with my union to elect pro-worker candidates.
- To get the word out to fellow members of my union and get them activated
- To team up with others in my community to defend public services and the public employees who provide them.
- To take part in other activities to help win this fight. Please get in touch with me about more ways I can get involved.