

July 2, 2004

To the Honorable Members of the  
Illinois House of Representatives  
93<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly

This legislation promotes an important purpose: increasing pension benefits to the surviving spouse and children of firefighters. Yet, this legislation also poses a significant hurdle: increasing property taxes to pay for this purpose outside the limits of tax caps and the voter approval process required by them. The challenge, which we have faced throughout state government, is to fund important services and programs without asking the people of Illinois to pay more in taxes. I remain committed to this principle and cannot support legislation that asks for an increase in property taxes.

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby veto and return House Bill 599, entitled "AN ACT in relation to pensions."

Sincerely,

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH  
Governor