**Legislative Action Report**

**April 2024**

By Dick Simpson

Our new legislative committee had its first briefing and committee meeting on February 16th to coordinate our legislative activities during 2024. In March and April, we began meeting with legislators. The schedule of the first several meetings is: 1) Marty Gartzman set up the meeting with Rep. Kelly Cassidy on March 15; Ashish Sen had the meeting with Majority Leader Robyn Gabel on March 26; Michele Thompson has a meeting with Sen. Robert Peters on April 8; and Carolyn Arnold is setting up a meeting with Debbie Meyers-Martin in early April. Each meeting has included 2-5 SUAA-UIC members and SUAA staff members who meet with legislators **by Zoom.** (As I will probably not be able to attend the Board meeting, Ashish will report on the result of his meeting and tips for those who want to set up meetings.) Bryan and Thomas (SUAA staff) have been impressed with the impact of the meetings and plan to roll out the program to more SUAA chapters next year.

These have been primarily listening tours to hear the legislator’s legislative priorities. But we have also let them know our concerns. We stress protection of Tier 1 pensions, better healthcare for members (many hospitals don’t accept TRAIL, and more may begin to turn it down), and improvements for Tier 2 to lower the time necessary to be vested and improve benefits at least to Social Security standards. The healthcare issue and Tier 2 problems have most grabbed the attention of the legislators. We should stress our advocacy in all communications to SUAA members and potential members.

Chris Keys and I have met by Zoom with the officers of the UIUC and the UIS Executive Committee to coordinate our legislative activities and other joint actions. As a chapter, we should participate in the UIUC meeting with legislators on April 28th at 2:30 by Zoom. (Chris will give a further report on the meetings with UIUC and UIS.)

For SUAA, I attended the Better Government Association meeting and luncheon on “PUBLIC PENSIONS: CAN THEY BE FIXED?”  Our lobbyist, Matt Maloney, was also there. I spoke up during the question period about our issues and met briefly with Senator Peters afterwards. He is one of our best advocates in Springfield. I will provide other pension information from the handouts at our May Board meeting.

The bottom line is that the idea of a Constitution Amendment has little support. The Governor’s budget proposal and the Civic Committee’s proposals have more support. At least, Sen. Peters and other legislative leaders recognize the Tier II problem and have some hope of doing more than a minimal fix (bringing it up to Social Security levels).