



Info on public pensions is not secret; it's private

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Once again, [Bertram de Souza](#) has published a column in The Vindicator, "Public Pensions Secrecy," about Ohio's pensions, which was sprinkled with pension-envy sensationalism, yet devoid of proper research.

When a nonpublic employee receives a paycheck, the employer pays the salary minus income, Social Security and Medicare taxes. The employer also pays a matching Social Security 6.2 percent and Medicare 1.45 percent tax on the worker's behalf. In addition, most companies, with more than 500 employees, also pay a matching 5 percent maximum of any employee donation into a 401(k)-type of retirement product.

Public employees pay the Medicare tax, plus 10 percent of their income into their retirement accounts. Their public employer pays 14 percent of salaries to the pension system; however, that entire amount does not accrue to the employee. Some 1.5 percent goes toward funding the state worker disability program, and 4.7 percent goes toward unfunded liabilities.

The employee only receives 6.2 percent, which is equal to an employer Social Security percentage, and a 1.6 percent matching contribution, which is far less than the 5 percent that a large employer would pay, and a 3.4 percent savings for Ohio taxpayers.

When a public employee receives his or her pay, including the employer's contribution, it is no longer the state's (taxpayers') money, but the employee's. What an employee earns on retirement investments and the pension amounts is private business and not that of any taxpayer. Why? Because no longer is any taxpayer money involved.

Just because the Ohio General Assembly retains the oversight of the pension systems' operations, for the protection of the contributors, does not open the doors to the public's curiosity about a member's personal financial information. It is not secret, just private.

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