Written by Leslie Wertheimer
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Legendary "explainer" helps enlighten Illinoisans about pension squeeze

CHICAGO – November 27, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn's new web campaign to educate Illinoisans about the pension squeeze was bolstered today by legendary "explainer" Salman Khan, who unveiled two videos to explain pensions in general and specifically lay out the Illinois pension crisis. Earlier this month, Governor Quinn met with Salman Khan in the governor's Chicago office, and Khan agreed to create an explainer video on Illinois' pension problem.

Khan's video on Illinois' pension problem and general video on pensions can be viewed at This IsMyIllinois.com
and the "Thanks in Advance"
Facebook page
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Founder of the trailblazing Khan Academy, Khan's 3,600 teaching videos have been viewed 204 million times. Khan - named by Time Magazine as one of the World's 100 Most Influential People - has appeared on "60 Minutes," "Colbert Report" and NPR to share his vision of offering a "world class education for everyone everywhere."

"The power of Salman Khan's videos comes from his ability to make a complex subject easy to grasp, and he does so in an informative and engaging style," Governor Quinn said. "We're delighted to have his help in enlightening Illinois citizens about how the pension problem came to be."

Employing his trademark " black blackboard" style, Khan focuses on Illinois' pension obligations in a seven-minute video in which he explains how spending on pensions will surpass spending for education by 2016. In his more general 10-minute video, he explains the concept of pensions - particularly the distinctions between "defined benefit" and "defined contribution" plans.

"Khan Academy is about life-long learning and we strive to help clarify topics that are important for understanding our society," Khan said. "When I learned about the underfunded pension situation in many states, especially in Illinois, I felt it was important that voters understand the issue themselves."

Governor Quinn recently launched an Internet campaign to educate everyday people on the 70-year old Illinois pension problem, deemed worst in the nation by the Pew Center on the States. Since launching, more than 28,000 unique visitors have gone to ThisisMyIllinois.com and a video featuring "Squeezy the Pension Python" has been viewed 20,000 times. The "Thanks in Advance" campaign is designed to boost public awareness about the "squeeze" caused by soaring pension costs and the need for pension reform.

In April, Governor Quinn proposed a plan to the General Assembly that would rescue Illinois' public pension systems, ensure employees have access to benefits and prevent skyrocketing pension costs from squeezing out core services such as education, health care and public safety. Quinn's plan would fully fund the pension system by 2042.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Khan is a former hedge fund manager who founded the

nonprofit Khan Academy after discovering a knack for tutoring. What began as a favor to his niece and nephews in 2006 - sharing his mathematics explainer videos - has grown into one of the world's fastest-growing, widely-used education tools. Last month, www.khanacademy.org had 6,000,000 unique visitors from nearly every nation on earth. Available in 16 languages, Khan's explainer videos cover topics ranging from math and science to history and finance. He is author of "The One World School House: Education Reimagined".

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