

# NTU NEWS RELEASE

## NATIONAL TAXPAYERS UNITED OF ILLINOIS

407 S. Dearborn, Suite 1170 \* CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605

(312) 427-5128 \* Fax (312) 427-5139 \* Web Site <www.ntui.org> \* E-mail <ntui@ntui.org>

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Contact: Jim Tobin (773) 354-2076 (c)

(312) 427-5128 (o)

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### TAXPAYERS: PUT THE BREAKS ON \$100 MILLION DRIVER'S ED MANDATE

(CHICAGO) — The president of Illinois' largest taxpayer group today proposed a solution for government school systems having trouble funding driver's education and other mandated programs.

"Illinois taxpayers could save at least \$100 million if our government schools just dropped driver's education altogether," said **Jim Tobin**, president of National Taxpayers United of Illinois (NTU). "Instead of forcing this ridiculous taxpayer-funded 'universal driver's ed,' parents should teach their own kids to drive, or take them to one of the many private driving schools."

"Driver's ed is a prime example of the costly, unnecessary state-mandated programs that drive up the cost of government schools without improving education," said Tobin. "After lobbying to require driver's ed in government schools, and driving up pay for driver's ed instructors to an average of \$65,000 for nine months of employment, the greedy bureaucrats at many local government school districts are now complaining that they need *more* money for driver's ed."

According to the Illinois State Board of Education, government schools spend \$52 million per year on driver's ed, with approximately 2,000 full-time and part-time government-school driving teachers employed statewide. However, the \$52 million total figure does not include pension costs for driver's ed teachers. On Jan. 25, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that full-time government-school driving teachers averaged nearly \$65,000 for nine months of employment, and that 11 percent of these driving teachers are paid salaries of over \$100,000. Taking this information into account, NTU estimates total statewide taxpayer-funded driver education program costs to be at least \$100 million.

"As usual, the only people benefitting from state-mandated driver education are the government school teachers," said Tobin. "That's why they lobby so hard for these unnecessary mandated programs — to fill their own pockets with more taxpayer money. It's time to end the government school Overspending Crisis by cutting driver's ed and other unnecessary cash-cow programs out of tax-funded education entirely."

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Established in 1976, National Taxpayers United of Illinois (NTU) is the largest taxpayer organization in Illinois with over 10,000 members and affiliation with more than 200 local taxpayer organizations.

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