



Brokeback pensions

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By: David Stokes

Could [this ruling](#) be the straw that breaks the camel's back for City of St. Louis finances? Probably not, but having to come up with \$24 million is going to be very difficult. And from the article it sounds like even more may be due by the time this all play out.

The decision could force the city to put \$23 million more toward the police pension fund for years not included in the court case, said Police Retirement System lawyer James C. Owen, and possibly millions on top of that for the firefighters' fund.

It seems every election the City is trying to increase the sales tax here or the property tax there. The tax increase always seems to pass, and is usually a very small one, but it does not take a genius to realize these small taxes add up. It appears that the City is either going to have to raise \$24 million or cut \$24 million. I know which one I would recommend. I suspect the easiest way for them to raise the money would be to not roll back tax rates in response to the 2007 assessment. I don't know where the City stands in relation to its Hancock cap, and therefore what the forced roll back would be, but if City property values go up substantially this assessment period, [as they did in 2005](#), reducing the roll back would be one easy way to at least get some of the money. I am not at all saying they should do this, I am just saying they might try to. The City should do about 100 other things to cut \$24 million first, but that is a topic for a detailed study, not a blog post.

About the Author



David Stokes

David Stokes was a policy analyst at the Show-Me Institute from 2007 to 2014 and was director of development from 2014 to 2016.

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Show-Me Institute

5297 Washington Place	3645 Troost Avenue
Saint Louis, MO 63108	Kansas City, MO 64109
Phone: (314) 454-0647	Phone: (816) 287-0370
Fax: (314) 454-0667	

Email: info@showmeinstitute.org

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