

\FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE December 22, 2023

Scandalous Greed Unveiled: Gadsden County Politicians Exploit Taxpayers for Personal Gain



In a shocking Christmas-time taxpayer money grab, political greed unfolds in Gadsden County, Florida, Clerk Nicholas Thomas and Tax Collector W. Dale Summerford shamelessly exploit their positions to pocket exorbitant taxpayer-funded pension bonuses. This display of gluttony sets a new low for political personal enrichment, particularly in one of the poorest counties in Florida.

Scheduled for December 31, 2023, Clerk Nicholas Thomas's pension cash bonus of \$535,856 fails to satisfy his insatiable appetite. Demonstrating cunning maneuvering, Thomas submitted paperwork on August 9, 2023, petitioning for an additional three years of pension bonus accrual, pushing the total to an indefensible \$602,765. Plus Thomas's monthly taxpayer-funded pension will soar from \$9,135 to approximately \$10,275.

Likewise, Tax Collector W. Dale Summerford, not content with a \$470,959 pension cash bonus scheduled for December 31, 2023, followed suit with shameless disregard for fiscal responsibility. Summerford's request for 3 additional years of pension bonus submitted on October 27, 2023, increases his cash bonus from \$470,959 to \$529,764, raising his monthly taxpayer-funded pension from \$7,931 to approximately \$10,627. Both politicians will also enjoy a monthly healthcare subsidy of \$225.

Dave Jaye, a researcher at www.tripledippers.org, comments, "Sneaky Politicians "The Grinch" Nicholas Thomas and "Scrooge" W. Dale Summerford are greedy. How many gourmet meals, luxury cars, and vacation homes does one person need?"

Thomas and Summerford earn a base paycheck of \$131,979, plus pensions, plus approximately \$52,791 in annual benefits without contributing the standard 3% of their salary (\$3,959) to the Florida Pension program, like all other public employees.

To put the staggering pension bonuses in perspective, their \$1,132,529 combined pension cash bonuses could provide 57,459 tutor hours for 991 Gadsden County High School students, improving job and college readiness.

<https://www.care.com/cost/tutors/tallahassee-fl> Only 13.5% of Gadsden High School students are college-ready, only 34% are proficient in Reading, 20% are proficient in Math, and 14% are proficient in

Science. <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/florida/districts/gadsen-district-school-district/>

[gadsden-county-high-school-5023#:~:text=Gadsden%20County%20High%20School%20is,of%20students%20are%20economically%20disadvantaged.](#)

While these politicians take bushels of taxpayer money, Gadsden County suffers with a poverty rate of 24.2%, almost double the statewide average of 12.7%. The average Gadsden County wage worker, earning \$44,042, would need over 13.6 years to match Clerk Nicholas Thomas's \$602,765 pension cash bonus.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/205451/poverty-rate-in-florida>

There are legal questions about Thomas's and Summerford's attempts to collect higher pension cash bonuses, given their signed contract promises to retire on December 31, 2023, as a condition of receiving Pension cash bonuses in the DROP Triple Dippers Program (attached).

Governor Jim DeSantis signed SB 7024 effective July 1, 2023 allowing politicians and bureaucrats to extend pension bonuses by 60% from 5 to 8 years and up to ten year for School Employees and increased the pension bonus interest rate from 1.2 to 4% and allow many to collect pension bonuses earlier¹. The Triple Dipper Pension Bonus system created \$39 billion in unfunded Florida Retirement obligations, amounting to a \$1,725 liability for every man, woman, and child in Florida.

<https://thecapitolist.com/frs-double-dip-retirement-expansion-will-make-it-harder-for-private-sector-to-compete-with-state/>

For a comprehensive list of Florida's Triple Dippers, visit

<https://tripleddippers.org/fl-statewide-2023-june-28537-tripleddippers/>.

For media inquiries, please contact:



TRIPLEDIPPERS.org

Exposing Public Corruption and Wasteful Spending

Dave Jaye [Researcher] (586) 488-5177
dave.jaye55@gmail.com ★ Facebook.com/dave.jaye.16

¹ <https://thecapitolist.com/frs-double-dip-retirement-expansion-will-make-it-harder-for-private-sector-to-compete-with-state/>