FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAPPING COLLIER COUNTY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE BANKED LEAVE AT 60 HOURS SAVES $37.86 MILLION; COULD FUND PROPERTY TAX CUTS

COLLIER COUNTY, FL — TripleDippers.org released a comprehensive forensic audit of Collier County Government public employee leave banks and salary rosters, revealing systemic stockpiling of taxpayer-funded time off. The analysis exposes hundreds of bureaucrats hoarding hundreds—and in some cases thousands—of hours of unused leave, creating an artificial financial liability that drains public resources and artificially increases public pension calculations.

Capping banked leave at 60 hours per employee would eliminate **$37.86 million** in artificial liabilities across Collier County Government's 2,276 employees. Collier County employees cash out unused banked hours at their final highest salary, not the salary when time off was earned. With 1,796 bureaucrats currently hoarding 866,910 hours of excess time off, this sensible reform reduces the county's total leave liability by **89.75%**, immediately protecting taxpayers from paying artificially high, bloated pension payouts and unlocking millions to fund meaningful property tax relief. See the full sortable list at:

Collier County Manager Amy Patterson is encouraging this banked-leave taxpayer rip-off by collecting a salary of $270,000 and 2,652 banked hours over one year, costing taxpayers an extra $344,315! Across Collier County's 2,276 employees, the total accumulated liability of banked leave reaches an astounding $42,179,892. Among them, 266 employees have hoarded over 1,000 hours of paid time off, and 55 employees have accumulated over a full year (more than 2,080 hours) of unused days off. The Collier County Banked Hour King is Robert Dennison, a Plant Mechanic in the Public Utilities Department. Annual Salary: $97,767. Total banked hours: 4,915 (2.3 years), taking an extra $216,836 from taxpayers in higher property taxes!

"By capping banked leave at 60 hours—mirroring private sector standards—we not only protect public safety and ensure employees take necessary time off for mental health and quality family responsibilities, but we also unlock the millions needed to deliver meaningful property tax cuts to our residents," concluded Dave Jaye, Chairman of the Lee County Taxpayers Association and Lead Researcher at https://tripledippers.org/. Tripledippers.org has been documenting and exposing Florida politicians and bureaucrat pension bonus abuses since 2018. See the 2025 Collier County Government Pension Bonus abuses at: https://tripledippers.org/fl-collier-county-2025-report/ and https://tripledippers.org/triple-dippers-hall-of-shame/

"This taxpayer burden is compounded by a stark economic disparity: 85% of private-sector workers and taxpayers do not have a traditional pension, yet taxpayers are forced to pay guaranteed public employee pension bonuses and life-long pensions with our property taxes," said Dave Jaye. To protect hardworking taxpayers and restore government accountability, Tripledippers.org is proposing two critical fiscal reforms:

Enforce a strict 60-hour cap on banked leave, aligning government operations with modern private-sector standards.

Mandate that all banked leave be paid out at the salary rate in effect when the hours were earned, eliminating the outrageous taxpayer rip-off of cashing out accumulated time at inflated final-year salaries.

The Problem: Multi-Thousand-Hour Stockpiles and Pension Spiking

In the private sector, companies enforce strict use-it-or-lose-it policies or modest carryover limits (typically 40 to 80 hours) to encourage work-life balance and control corporate liabilities. In stark contrast, local government records reveal extreme hoarding across Collier County departments.

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The following "**Dirty Dozen**" list exposes Collier County officials and employees hoarding over a year's worth of banked days off at public expense:

Name	Department	Role	Annual Salary	Pension Bonus	Age	Banked Hours	Banked Hours $
John Plummer Jr.	Public Safety	Paramedic Company Officer	$121,658	$1,099,232	57	608	$35,535
Guy Spieth	Public Safety	Paramedic Company Officer	$116,979	$811,204	57	1,836	$103,280
Heidi Cicko	County Attorney Office	Managing Assistant County Attorney	$201,239	$772,059	62	926	$89,587
Marc Matthews	Public Safety	Paramedic Company Officer	$116,979	$770,298	56	1,303	$73,302
Thomas McColloch	Public Safety	EMS Captain	$116,427	$757,941	56	202	$11,329
Michael Sullivan	Public Safety	Paramedic Company Officer	$119,318	$706,666	60	660	$37,832
Wayne Watson	Public Safety	EMS Battalion Chief	$165,030	$648,328	61	2,047	$162,375
Michele Williamson	Public Safety	EMS Battalion Chief	$148,617	$575,005	61	151	$10,758
Rhonda Watkins	Transportation Management Services	Project Manager III	$121,042	$534,447	59	1,242	$72,275
Cynthia Long	County Manager Operations	Accountant II	$102,056	$484,961	61	3,926	$192,641
Christine Willoughby	Growth Management - Community Development	Planner III	$111,649	$454,858	61	1,066	$57,236
David Stedman	Corporate Business Operations	Database Administrator	$125,590	$414,539	64	2,449	$147,883

“Allowing bureaucrats and politicians to cash out these massive reserves at their peak career salaries—rather than the wage rates when the time was actually earned—artificially takes more money from taxpayers and spikes their final-year compensation, which is what their pension bonus lifetime pension payments are based on,” noted Dave Jaye.

"It is fundamentally unfair that 85% of hardworking taxpayers have no pension of their own, yet they are forced to finance guaranteed pensions, Social Security matches, and bloated leave payouts for politicians and government bureaucrats,” said Dave Jaye.

Collier County DROP Pension Bonus Participants and Leave Hoarding

The fiscal abuse is compounded when examining senior officials participating in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP), where accumulated leave balances stack on top of lucrative pension bonuses. Here’s Collier County Government’s “Dirty Dozen” pension cash bonus employees, most of whom were not satisfied with a 5-year pension bonus and demanded and received an 8-year pension bonus:

The Triple Dipper Crisis

This crisis goes beyond excessive leave. "Triple Dippers" refers to Florida bureaucrats who file fake retirement paperwork to collect both a pension and a paycheck simultaneously for up to 8 years while dodging the standard 3% employee contribution to the Florida Retirement System (FRS) leaving taxpayers on the hook to pay an exorbitant 22.02% FRS contribution from property taxes.

"Cashing out unused days off at their final, highest salary is the cherry on top of a pension bonus system taxpayer rip-off," said Jaye. (See the statewide list of 32,259 Florida politicians and bureaucrats collecting over $9.9 billion in public pension bonuses at https://tripledippers.org/fl-statewide-tripledippers-dec-2025/).

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) must immediately protect taxpayers, ensure public safety, and support mental health and quality family responsibilities by demanding that employees take their leave. Collier County policy must change to impose strict limits: capping banked leave at 40 hours for newer employees and 60 hours for senior staff and prohibiting the artificial inflation of pension payouts through excessive leave cash-outs.

“Florida’s public pension bonus system has created a $39 billion unfunded state pension liability—approximately $1,725 to be paid by every Florida resident.” 303 Florida cities, fire and special districts formed their own expensive retirement system to collect pension bonuses 50% to 80% higher than the Florida Retirement System. Eliminating Florida pension bonuses could fund property tax relief!” concluded Dave Jaye.

Stay tuned for investigative reports about Collier County elected officials, the Collier County school district, fire districts, and cities at https://tripledippers.org/

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https://usataxfighters.org/
https://www.facebook.com/LeeCountyTaxpayersAssociation
https://tripledippers.org/

Research & Data Sources

BLS National Compensation Survey (Paid Sick Leave & Carryover Provisions): https://www.bls.gov/ebs/factsheets/paid-sick-leave.htm
BLS The Economics Details (Private Industry Leave Statistics & Carryover Breakdown): https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2024/86-percent-of-private-industry-transportation-and-warehousing-workers-had-paid-sick-leave-in-2023.htm
FRS Expansion Analysis: https://thecapitolist.com/frs-double-dip-retirement-expansion-will-make-it-harder-for-private-sector-to-compete-with-state/
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