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## Bi-partisan legislation to Protect Retiree Health Benefits Introduced in U.S. House of Representatives

### --- Joins U.S. Senate Bill (S.2418) Recently Introduced

U.S. Representative Louise Slaughter (NY-D-23) has introduced new federal legislation to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the National Labor Relations Act to protect the earned health benefits of American retirees. The new bi-partisan bill (H.R. 5523) is co-sponsored by Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC).

The proposed legislation requires that retirees be informed of a modification or termination of their benefits and creates a legal presumption that earned healthcare benefits cannot be reduced or terminated during retirement.

The bill is a companion to S.2418, the Bankruptcy Fairness and Employee Benefits Protection Act, recently introduced by U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Jay Rockefeller (D-WV).

Jim Casey, President of ProtectSeniors.Org said, "The introduction of this legislation is a great win for the millions of retirees who are worried about the security of their benefits. We thank Rep. Slaughter for introducing this bill, which is a critical step in getting much-needed retiree protections signed into law." ProtectSeniors.Org is a non-profit retiree advocacy organization fighting to protect the benefits of millions of retirees across the United States. Its membership includes retirees from 392 companies, 45 labor unions, 98 municipal, state and federal retiree groups, and 16 retiree associations.

Jack Brennan, Chairman of the 128,000 member Association of BellTel Retirees, said, "Post-retirement health benefits are not entitlements, they are earned benefits that were paid for by workers and guaranteed by employers. It is critical that Congress is seeking to acknowledge this and make companies live up to their fiduciary responsibilities."

C. William Jones, Chairman of ProtectSeniors.Org and President of the Association of BellTel Retirees said, "Having companion and bi-partisan legislation is a big achievement. It is imperative that our nation's elected officials address this unfortunate economic and healthcare concern for America's retirees and make history by enacting change to protect vulnerable older Americans."

The links to the House and Senate legislation are below:

<https://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/5523/titles>

<https://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2418>

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