

## Letters to the editor Thursday

### Health bill takes aim at retirees

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On Christmas Eve the U.S. Senate slid through its own version of the healthcare reform bill. The bill fails to protect the earned post-retirement health care benefits of tens of millions of American retirees like me. Unjustly, this legislation goes a step further in the wrong direction by actually financially penalizing corporations that do the right thing by continuing to provide retiree prescription drug benefits they promised to their former workers.

This process is being done behind closed doors versus going through the normal conference process, which means retirees will again get left behind.

In the amended Senate legislation, it requires a change in the tax status of payments for retiree health benefits that would negatively impact many companies' earnings statements and encourage them to actually drop drug benefits for millions of retirees, instead of keeping it in place. Many leading corporations including Boeing, John Deere, MetLife, Xerox as well as the AFL-CIO have complained loudly about this and say they intend to lobby against the Senate action.

The anti-retiree and anti-baby boomer legislation that passed the Senate encourages, and in some cases will force, corporations to reduce benefits. Ironically, those of us who have already earned health benefits by making sacrifices during our working years now have to fight our own elected officials.

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