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

U.S. Representative Louise Slaughter (NY-D-25) 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. 1856) 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.

Rep. Slaughter said, "Promises made should be promises kept when it comes to retirees' hard-earned benefits. Too often, retiree benefits are first on the chopping block when big businesses run into financial trouble. This bipartisan bill will help address the tactics some companies use to avoid meeting their commitments to their employees. I'm pleased to join with my Republican colleague Walter Jones from North Carolina to re-introduce this bill on behalf of the thousands of retirees in my district and throughout the country."

Jim Casey, President of ProtectSeniors.Org said, "This legislation is critical for millions of retirees who are worried about the security of their earned benefits. Rep. Slaughter's introduction of this bill is a critical step in getting much-needed retiree protections signed into federal law. This is the first time since ERISA was passed that this legislation treats healthcare benefits that were earned as vested benefits."

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, including 8,200 retirees in New York State.

Jack Brennan, President of the 130,000 member Association of BellTel Retirees, said, "Post-retirement health benefits are not and have never been entitlements, they are earned benefits that America's retirees labouring for decades for a single employer and were guaranteed by the companies we were loyal to. Congress acknowledging this issue and mandates that companies uphold their fiduciary responsibilities is critical." The Association of BellTel Retirees has more than 48,500 members living in New York State.

The link to the legislation is below:

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr1856/text>

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