

From: Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.

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For Immediate Release

The Association of BellTel Retirees endorses federal legislation that protect retiree health benefits

The Association of BellTel Retirees announced its full support and urged immediate passage of federal legislation, Employee Benefits Protection Act of 2015 (H.R. 1856). This critical legislation was introduced by U.S. Representative Louise Slaughter (NY-D-25), who has been a tireless champion of retiree issues.

The proposed legislation would amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the National Labor Relations Act to protect the earned health benefits of tens of millions of retired Americans.

H.R. 1856 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 new bill treats the earned benefits as vested benefits that can no longer be eliminated by CEOs.

Jack Brennan, President of the Association of BellTel Retirees, said, “Post-retirement health benefits are not and have never been entitlements. They are earned benefits that America’s retirees laboured for decades for a single employer and were guaranteed by the companies for which we were loyal. Congress is acknowledging this issue and mandates that companies uphold their fiduciary responsibilities.”

The link to the legislation is below:

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

The Association of BellTel Retirees is a 130,000 member non-profit advocacy group that works for the protection of retirees’ pensions and benefits of the following companies of the old Bell System. They include: *NYNEX, New York Telephone, New Jersey Bell and Bell Atlantic, Bell of Pennsylvania, Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone, Diamond State Telephone, New England Telephone, MCI and GTE*, as well as the Verizon spin-off *DexMedia*.

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