

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

February 8, 2021

The Honorable Richard E. Neal, Chairman
The Honorable Kevin Brady, Ranking Member
Ways and Means Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady:

The AFL-CIO strongly supports the single- and multiemployer pension provisions contained in the “Butch Lewis Emergency Pension Plan Relief Act of 2021” scheduled for markup this week in the Ways and Means Committee.

These provisions are critically important and long overdue for the more than one million multiemployer pension plan retirees who have been living in fear that they will lose the retirement income they have earned after a lifetime of hard work because their plans and their insurance backstop, the PBGC multiemployer guaranty fund, are headed for insolvency.

The current pandemic has only deepened the need for congressional action; previously healthy multiemployer plans have taken a financial hit in the form of reduced employer contributions. The shutdown of our economy has resulted in job loss for millions of our nation’s workers affecting employer contribution to multiemployer plans because they are based on employee hours worked. That is, layoffs necessarily mean a loss in contribution income. The legislation your Committee will consider this week contains provisions to protect currently healthy plans from sliding into solvency because of this unprecedented situation.

This legislation will also go a long way towards stabilizing the PBGC and the multiemployer pension system overall. This system not only provides retirement income to 10.4 million hard-working Americans, obviating their need to rely on government safety-net programs that already are stretched thin, but also generates more than \$158 billion annually in federal tax revenue.

At this most challenging time for our nation—the list of pressing needs requiring congressional action is long—we appreciate your Committee’s recognition that preserving the retirement income security of hard-working Americans is a matter of the utmost importance. It is of great consequence to the individual workers whose pension benefits are at risk, as well as to their families and communities across the country.

We look forward to a strong Ways and Means Committee vote of support for the “Butch Lewis Emergency Pension Plan Relief Act of 2021.”

Sincerely,



William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs

Cc: all members, House Ways and Means Committee

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

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