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Cadre of Retirees Heading to Washington, DC to Remind Members of Congress about Issues Important to Retirees

WASHINGTON (Sept. 10, 2009) In the midst of Congress' focus on health care reform, a cadre of retirees from across the nation will be visiting their U.S. Senators and Representatives in Washington, DC on Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 16 and 17, to remind them that health care is not the only issue impacting retirees.

"While we will provide our views on retirement health care issues, we want members of Congress to understand there is a need for legislation to protect pensions," said Bill Kadereit, President of the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN). "Also, it is critical that legislative changes be made to provide retirees fairer treatment under bankruptcy laws and the rules applied by the Pension Benefits Guaranty Corp. (PBGC) when it takes over pension plans."

Kadereit said 74 retirees will spend Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 15, in an orientation session with NRLN leaders who will brief retirees on information they should share with their lawmakers. This includes:

- Amending certain sections of H.R. 3200, the House health care reform bill, to protect retirees' employer-sponsored medical insurance benefits;
- Lowering the cost of prescription drugs through more competition in the pharmaceutical industry;
- Preventing employers from using pension plan assets for layoff payments;
- Elevating retirees' status in bankruptcy law to better protect their pensions and benefits, and
- Changing PBGC rules so retirees receive fairer treatment in the calculation of their payments after the default of their former employer's pension plans.

"Too many retirees are suffering silently as their pensions, health care and life insurance benefits are being stripped away," Kadereit said. "Growing numbers of retirees are facing ruined credit, home foreclosures, and are caught up in the rising number of personal bankruptcy filings."

Kadereit said the NRLN members' objective in Washington, DC will be to impress on members of Congress that retirees are becoming a major part of a vanishing middle class whose incomes are fast eroding due to broken promises on their retirement pensions and benefits.

According to Kadereit, the 74 retirees going to Capitol Hill have retired from 10 major American companies including AT&T, Chrysler, Detroit Edison, Delphi, Delta Air Lines, General Motors, Alcatel-Lucent, US West/Qwest and Verizon.

They are coming from 22 states including Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin.

"The retirees, many traveling great distances, are spending their personal time and money to have their voices heard by their elected representatives," Kadereit said. "They are speaking for the more than two million retirees who are part of the grassroots network represented by the NRLN."

About the NRLN:

Based in Washington, D.C., the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) is the only nationwide organization solely dedicated to representing the interests of retirees and future retirees. The NRLN's mission is to secure federal legislation to protect retirees' employer-sponsored pensions and benefits plus keep Social Security and Medicare strong. The NRLN is a non-partisan, grassroots coalition of retiree associations and individual members representing more than two million retired men and women seeking to preserve the retirement benefits they earned during their many years of employment. For more information, visit the NRLN Web site at <http://www.nrln.org>.

NOTE: Journalists interested in covering the retirees' activities are asked to contact Ed Beltram, NRLN Vice President – Communications, at 719-687-3766 or send an email to edbeltram@msn.com .