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# Guidance on Requesting a Meeting with your Elected Representative in Congress:

1. Visit your elected representative’s website. They may have an online meeting request form (example: <http://www.brown.senate.gov/schedule-request>) or an online contact form (example: <https://www.levin.senate.gov/contact/email/>) which can be filled out with your request. The content below can help you fill out some of these forms.
2. You may also prefer physically mailing or faxing it into his/her office. The specific contact information for the office is often at the bottom of the elected representative’s website or on their “contact us” page.
3. If you know the scheduler’s name or contact information, you may also want to send your request to them, as well.
4. After at least three business days, it is important to follow up with the Member of Congress’ office to ensure that your letter was received and directed to the correct person.
5. When you contact an office via phone, ask for the scheduling office or scheduler. These staff review and organize invitations and requests.
6. For your request, keep it brief and get right to the point. Members of Congress and their staff review hundreds of letters a day. Brevity is a plus in ensuring your message resonates with the staff member reading it.
7. BE COURTEOUS. Demanding answers or being rude will not secure a meeting.
8. Below are sample letters that you can borrow from/use/modify to request a meeting with your Member of Congress with placeholders for you to customize content with your experience or local information. Making the letter personal is important and will help ensure that the Member of Congress and their staff know they are hearing from a concerned constituent.

Dear Congressman/woman XXXX,

(I am / we are) (one of / among the) more than 10 million Americans in a pension system that is in urgent need of reform. Multiemployer pensions have been a valuable benefit for employers and employees alike and millions count on them for retirement security.

Unfortunately, (my / our) plan is classified as “deeply troubled” and before it becomes insolvent or faces the severe and automatic cuts from the federal pension backstop (the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation or PBGC) mandated under current law, my fellow [INDUSTRY] (workers / employers) and I would like Congress to adopt measures that will give us the tools we need to secure these pensions.

We’re not asking for a handout or a bailout – we know both are unlikely. Instead, we urge Congress to back the reform proposal known as Solutions Not Bailouts which gives us and our plan trustees the ability to make needed changes and secure our retirement for the long-term. The proposal allows plan trustees to modernize, plan for the future, or in some cases like ours, allow for modest – and voluntary – reductions in benefits now before severe and automatic ones come later.

[PERSONAL EXPERIENCE] – Example: We’ve done everything we can but have run out of options. We’ve reduced benefit levels and contributed more wages – but it isn’t enough to save our plan and now the pensions we’ve worked for could soon vanish.

There is a pension reform proposal currently working its way through the relevant committees in Congress and as one of your constituents, I would like to request a meeting with you or your staff to tell you about the coming crisis that could put at risk the pension that I have worked my whole life to secure.

There are many of us here in this state/district. In [Michigan] alone there are [more than 56,000] retirees with multiemployer pensions and [close to 3,000] contributing employers. Even though our pensions are private, we make up a huge chunk of our state’s economy.

During your August district work period, we would like to come in and talk to you about it or brief your staff.

We will be happy to meet with you and your staff at your convenience. Please let us know when we can meet with you. We will also be calling your office.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for considering our request.

Sincerely,

XXXX

Dear Congressman/Congresswoman xxxx,

I understand that key provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 will expire at the end of this year, and the federal ‘backstop’ for multiemployer plans will run out of money in less than 10 years. As a participant in the multiemployer pension system, I’d like to request a meeting with you to discuss how this issue impacts me and more than [50,000] retirees in [Michigan].

If Congress doesn’t take action, the retirees and workers in these plans may see their retirement security disappear. No one expects a bailout, but burying our heads in the sand and hoping for the best will only worsen the situation.

[Personal Experience] – Example: My wife/husband and I worked for [30] years to earn our pension and now we’ve been retired for [5] years. We know that several multiemployer plans that are in jeopardy of running out of money threaten the whole system. While our plan is not one that is at risk, we want to make sure the system doesn’t collapse and that there is long-term retirement security for our family and others who get these types of pensions.

A group of labor and business leaders are backing a common-sense proposal to help avoid a crisis. I wish we didn’t need to take urgent action, but for those pension plans at risk of going under, this proposal provides a roadmap to preserve benefits, secure retirement and shore up the employers who contribute to the plans. It also allows for new, innovative plan designs that will preserve benefits in the future. The plan is called “Solutions Not Bailouts” and it doesn’t require taxpayers to foot the bill – but it does require Congress to act.

During your August district work period, we would like to come in and talk to you about it or brief your staff.

Please contact us to set a meeting. We will also be calling your office.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

XXXX

Dear Congressman/woman XXXX,

Like me, many of my neighbors are in the [construction] industry and we rely on what’s called a multiemployer plan for our retirement. These are private pensions and some of them are at risk. To solve the problems these retirement plans face, some are calling for taxpayers to bail us out.

I’d like to schedule a meeting to talk to you and your staff during the August recess to talk about the issues multiemployer pensioners like me and more than [50,000] other [Michiganders] are facing if this system collapses.

As a plan participant, I would love for the government to wave a magic wand and make everything ok. Fortunately, there is another way to avoid a true retirement crisis for multiemployer pension participants that does not require a magician’s touch or a taxpayer bailout. It does, however, require Congress to make changes to the system to ensure these plans can survive in the long-term.

A group of business and labor leaders who came together to find a way out of this mess proposed “Solutions Not Bailouts,” a reform proposal that protects benefits, shores up the plans, and helps employers prepare for the future.

The status quo is not acceptable – especially since the federal agency that secures these pensions is quickly running out of money. Congress can take action to reform the system, saving the taxpayers and preserving our pensions.

I look forward to speaking to you about this timely issue soon. I will call and follow up with your office to secure a date.

Sincerely,

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