**Solutions Not Bailouts Outreach Toolkit**

Thank you for joining us to help support Solutions Not Bailouts, a comprehensive approach to safeguard multiemployer pensions and preserve long-term retirement security for plan participants.

In the following packet of information, you will find a series of tools for engaging your member of Congress, detailed instructions on how to add your voice to the debate and sample content for letters to the editor, letters to your member of Congress and sample opinion editorials to send to your local newspaper.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out via email to [info@solutionsnotbailouts.com](mailto:info@solutionsnotbailouts.com).

Thanks again for your continued support.

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# Guidance on Writing and Submitting a Letter to the Editor

1. Review your local paper’s guidelines for publishing letters to the editor (limits on word count, format and methods to submit for publication). This information can be found online under the “Opinion” section of your paper’s web site.
2. Consider searching for recent news coverage of pensions, retirement security, the economic recovery, or Congress, etc. in your local publications. If you find something to respond to that relates to multiemployer pensions, cite it and give your response.
3. If you aren’t writing to respond to a specific article, use your letter to call on the editors/lawmakers/the community to urge Congress to take action to protect multiemployer retirement plans and explain what it means for you/your community.
4. Keep it brief and get right to the point. Letters to the Editor are often restricted to under 150 words, so you likely won’t be able to say everything you want. Try to get across why pension reform that safeguards multiemployer plans is important to you and your community. There are some sample letters below that you can borrow from/use/modify.
5. If possible, convey your key messages using an anecdote about your experience with the pensions and retirement system, what you’ve seen in your community or why this is important to you now. Highlight upcoming key events that relate to multiemployer pensions or retirement security.
6. Find the submission email address on your paper’s website and send it in.

# Sample Letters to the Editor

The below letters to the editor are examples of things that you can submit to local newspapers with placeholders for you to customize content for a local audience. Feel free to add/change/reorder/remove certain lines should you feel as though your audience would be more receptive to other language. Adding your own experiences is also important.

Dear Editor,

Don’t look now, but more than 10 million Americans are in a pension system that is in much need of reform before it turns into the next major fiscal crisis. A type of private pensions called “multiemployer pensions” have been hit hard by the recent economic slowdown. Making matters worse, key provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 will expire at the end of 2014.

If Congress doesn’t take action, the retirees and workers in these plans may see their retirement security disappear. Burying our heads in the sand and banking on a bailout will only worsen the situation. The federal agency that backstops these plans is in poor financial shape.

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 any steps, 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. Let’s hope they do it before it’s too late.

Dear Editor,

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.

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. However, we do need 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. Some people are trying to trivialize the situation that we face or paint rosy scenarios about the likelihood of a Congressional bailout. That’s unlikely. However, Congress can take action to reform the system, saving the taxpayers and preserving our pensions.

Dear Editor,

There are more than 10 million Americans currently enrolled in multiemployer pension plans, and the federal agency that serves as a backstop to those plans, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, is in danger of going insolvent in the next 10-20 years according to their own estimates. Multiemployer pensions were hit hard by the so-called “great recession” and as a result, the retirement security of these Americans is in jeopardy.

With the multiemployer provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 set to expire next year, Congress has the chance to address this looming crisis. A group of business and labor leaders have outlined the “Solutions not Bailouts” proposal that will protect multiemployer pension participants and their employers while securing retirements and boosting the economy.

We need Congress to act. I urge our Congressman/woman XXX to implement the “Solutions Not Bailouts” reforms to the multiemployer pension system to protect benefits for middle-class workers and their employers in [STATE].

Dear Editor,

Look no further for the next potential financial crisis than the end of 2014 when key provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 are set to expire. Today, more than 10 million Americans participate in multiemployer pension plans in industries including construction, entertainment, retail and transportation to name just a few. These plans are in jeopardy, as many have been hit hard by the Great Recession and the federal agency that backstops those plans in case of insolvency is itself on the brink of running out of money.

A group of labor and business leaders put their heads together for a common-sense and self-help solution to this problem. For plans that are at risk of going insolvent, it provides a roadmap to help preserve retiree benefits. For those plans that are recovering from the financial crisis, it provides new, innovative plan designs that will help them in the future. The proposal is called “Solutions Not Bailouts” and it doesn’t require taxpayers to foot the bill – but it does require Congress to act.

Rep. [NAME AND STATE] should support these solutions before it becomes a crisis.

Dear Editor,

**[PERSONAL OPENING**: EX- As someone who works in the XXX industry I have first-hand knowledge of the potential fallout of a pension crisis. *This paragraph should be a short summary about why you care about this issue*.]

Like me, many of my friends and neighbors also work in the XXX industry and we rely on what’s called a multiemployer pension to secure our retirements. Those multiemployer retirement plans are at risk now, however. Some are even facing insolvency after failing to recover from the Great Recession. Fortunately, most of these plans are ok, but Congress needs to act to make sure that more plans don’t end up in bad shape.

Thanks to a group of business and labor leaders there is a way out of this mess. Their approach, called “Solutions Not Bailouts,” makes sure that retiring workers have reliable income and keeps participating employers competitive – securing retirement and strengthening the economy. The Solutions Not Bailouts plan allows for new, innovative plan designs to modernize and maximize these pensions. Congress should enact these solutions for the sake of my neighbors and all of those who rely on these pensions.

Dear Editor,

It seems like everything that happens in Washington has to be sparked by a crisis. But there’s one pressing matter where the “sides” have already come to an agreement and all Congress needs to do is approve their solution that would save the pensions of hundreds of thousands of [STATEANS] – and avoid a crisis in the future.

Multiemployer pensions provide retirement benefits to millions of Americans. The economic collapse put severe strain on these plans, setting some on a path to insolvency. But business and labor leaders, the providers and beneficiaries of these pensions, have developed a long term solution that gives the plans the flexibility they need to preserve benefits for these workers and avoid bankruptcy for the employers – securing retirement and strengthening the economy. One reason these leaders want to act is because despite the reference in the name, there is no guarantee that Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) will be around to help – they recently announced a $36 billion deficit.

Some would prefer Congress do nothing because they believe the taxpayers will eventually foot the bill. I don’t think that banking on a bailout is a plan. Congress should approve reforms to the multiemployer pension system before they create another crisis.

For Individuals - Guidance on Writing and Submitting a Letter to your Elected Representative in Congress**:**

1. Visit your elected representative’s website to determine guidelines for submitting a letter to his/her office. This can either be done by filling out a form on the website and writing/pasting your letter in the required format, or by hand writing or typing your letter and physically mailing it into his/her office.
2. It is recommended that you submit your letter via the suggested channels on the member’s website, as physical mail is often extremely delayed in delivery due to strict security guidelines instituted by the U.S. House and Senate.
3. For your letter, keep it brief and get right to the point. Members of Congress receive hundreds of letters a day. Brevity is a plus in ensuring your message resonates with the staff member reading it.
4. Use your letter to call on the editors/lawmakers/the community to urge Congress to take action to protect multiemployer retirement plans and explain what it means for you/your community. Try to get across why pension reform that safeguards multiemployer plans is important to you and your community.
5. If possible, convey your key messages using an anecdote about your experience with the pensions and retirement system, what you’ve seen in your community or why this is important to you now. Highlight upcoming key events that relate to multiemployer pensions or retirement security.
6. There are some sample letters below that you can borrow from/use/modify.

Sample Letters to Members of Congress for Individuals

The below letters are examples of messages that you can send to YOUR Member of Congress with placeholders for you to customize content for a local audience. Feel free to add/change/reorder/remove certain lines should you feel as though your Member of Congress would be more receptive to other language. Adding your own experiences is important.

Dear Congressman/woman XXXX,

As one of your constituents, I feel like it is my responsibility to alert you to a coming crisis that could put at risk the pension that I have worked my whole life to secure.

More than 10 million Americans are in a pension system that is in much need of reform before it turns into the next major fiscal crisis. Many of them are here in our district. A type of private pensions called “multiemployer pensions” have been hit hard by the recent economic slowdown. I am part of one of those plans, and so are my neighbors and friends.

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.

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.

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 any steps, 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. Please consider this proposal and urge your colleagues to act on it before it is too late for people like me.

Sincerely,

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.

As a plan participant, I would love for the government to wave a magic wand and make everything ok – but we know that isn’t likely. 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. However, we do need 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. I know it isn’t ideal, but something has to be done. I am not trivializing the situation that we face or painting rosy scenarios about the likelihood of a Congressional bailout. I know that’s unlikely. However, Congress can take action to reform the system, saving the taxpayers and preserving our pensions. Please take a look at Solutions Not Bailouts (www.solutionsnotbailouts.com) and take action soon.

Sincerely,

Dear Congressman/woman XXXX,

There are more than 10 million Americans currently enrolled in a type of retirement plan called multiemployer pension plans – including many here in our own district. I just heard that federal agency that serves as a backstop to those plans, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, is in danger of going insolvent in the next 10-20 years according to the CBO and even their own estimates. This means that if plans like mine fail, we’ll be left with almost nothing. Like so many others, participants in multiemployer pensions were hit hard by the so-called “great recession” and as a result, the retirement security of these Americans is in jeopardy.

With the multiemployer provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 set to expire next year, Congress has the chance to address this looming crisis. A group of business and labor leaders have outlined the “Solutions not Bailouts” proposal that will protect multiemployer pension participants and their employers while securing retirements and boosting the economy.

I urge you to examine this proposal and implement the “Solutions Not Bailouts” reforms to the multiemployer pension system to protect benefits for middle-class workers and their employers here in [COMMUNITY/COUNTY/CITY]. Doing nothing is not an option for me and my family.

Sincerely,

Dear Congressman/woman XXXX,

For many families like mine, the next potential financial crisis could come at the end of this year when key provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 are set to expire. That’s because I am one of more than 10 million Americans who participate in multiemployer pension plans in industries including construction, entertainment, retail and transportation to name just a few. These plans are in jeopardy, as many have been hit hard by the Great Recession and the federal agency that backstops those plans in case of insolvency is itself on the brink of running out of money. If Congress doesn’t take up reforms soon, I worry that I, or my neighbors, could be left with very little for retirement.

A group of labor and business leaders put their heads together for a common-sense and self-help solution to this problem. For plans that are at risk of going insolvent, it provides a roadmap to help preserve retiree benefits. For those plans that are recovering from the financial crisis, it provides new, innovative plan designs that will help them in the future. The proposal is called “Solutions Not Bailouts” and it doesn’t require taxpayers to foot the bill – but it does require Congress to act.

We can’t afford to simply do nothing. I urge you to support these solutions and to take action before we face a retirement crisis.

Sincerely,

Dear Congressman/woman XXXX,

**[PERSONAL OPENING**: EX- As someone who works in the XXX industry I have first-hand knowledge of the potential fallout of a pension crisis. I have seen many of my peers face the risk of losing everything because of either the slow economic recovery or because their company hit financial trouble and had to stop contributing to the pension plan. *This paragraph should be a short summary about why you care about this issue*.]

Like me, many of my friends and neighbors also work in the XXX industry and we rely on what’s called a multiemployer pension to secure our retirements. Those multiemployer retirement plans are at risk now, however. Some are even facing insolvency after failing to recover from the Great Recession. Fortunately, most of these plans are ok, but Congress needs to act to make sure that more plans don’t end up in bad shape.

Thanks to a group of business and labor leaders there is a way to prevent the worst possible outcomes and strengthen the system for the long term. Their approach, called “Solutions Not Bailouts,” makes sure that retiring workers have reliable income and keeps participating employers competitive – securing retirement and strengthening the economy. The Solutions Not Bailouts plan allows for new, innovative plan designs to modernize and maximize these pensions.

Congress should enact these solutions for the sake of my neighbors and all of those who rely on these pensions. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Dear Congressman/woman XXXX,

Sadly, it seems like everything that happens in Washington has to be sparked by a crisis. It doesn’t have to be that way, if Congress takes action soon.

In fact, there’s one pressing matter where the “sides” have already come to an agreement and all Congress needs to do is approve their solution that would save the pensions of hundreds of thousands of [STATEANS] – and avoid a crisis in the future.

Multiemployer pensions provide retirement benefits to millions of Americans – people like me who work in the [XXX Industry]. The economic collapse put severe strain on these plans, setting some on a path to insolvency. But business and labor leaders, the providers and beneficiaries of these pensions, have developed a long term solution that gives the plans the flexibility they need to preserve benefits for these workers and avoid bankruptcy for the employers – securing retirement and strengthening the economy. One reason these leaders want to act is because despite the reference in the name, there is no guarantee that Pension Benefits Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) will be around to help – the CBO says their multiemployer fund is quickly running dry.

Some would prefer Congress do nothing because they believe the taxpayers will eventually foot the bill. I don’t think that banking on a bailout is a smart plan. I urge you and your colleagues to make these much-needed reforms to the multiemployer pension system before another crisis is born.

Sincerely,

# For Local Chapter and Plan Leaders - Guidance on Writing and Submitting a Letter to your Elected Representative in Congress:

1. Visit your elected representative’s website to determine guidelines for submitting a letter to his/her office. This can either be done by filling out a form on the website and writing/pasting your letter in the required format, or by hand writing or typing your letter and physically mailing it into his/her office.
2. It is recommended that you submit your letter via the suggested channels on the member’s website, as physical mail is often extremely delayed in delivery due to strict security guidelines instituted by the U.S. House and Senate.
3. For your letter, keep it brief and get right to the point. Members of Congress receive hundreds of letters a day. Brevity is a plus in ensuring your message resonates with the staff member reading it.
4. When you have sent the letter, please send a copy to [info@solutionsnotbailouts.com](mailto:info@solutionsnotbailouts.com) so we can compile the efforts of our supporters and leverage this support in the future.
5. Below is a sample letter that you can borrow from/use/modify.

# Sample Letters to Members of Congress for Local Chapter and Plan Leaders

(Use this language here if you are writing on behalf of a “Deeply Troubled” plan; language for use by other plans is below.)

Dear Senator/Representative:

As the (name of office and organization) representing XXXX union (name of trade or union), I am concerned about the retirement security of my members and the potential uncertainty coming to the multiemployer pension plans as parts of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (PPA) are scheduled to sunset at the end of this year. Put simply, even as our economy continues to recover, millions of workers and retirees could see the retirement benefits they have earned face serious threat if nothing is done to address these issues. We are not content to wait for plans to fail, for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) to become insolvent – which the Congressional Budget Office says could happen within the decade – or for a taxpayer bailout that we neither seek, nor expect.

Unfortunately, our plan is among the small percentage of multiemployer plans that require immediate intervention in order to preserve benefits for beneficiaries. For our participating employers, workers, and retirees, taking action to preserve multiemployer pensions could not be more urgent.

To proactively address this problem our union joined a group of more than 40 labor and business stakeholders to form the Retirement Security Review Commission, a group whose goal was to recommend solutions supported by both management and labor that would strengthen the existing system for the long-term. The result of that collaboration was a report that contains our recommendations entitled “Solutions Not Bailouts: A Comprehensive Plan from Business and Labor to Safeguard Multiemployer Retirement Security, Protect Taxpayers and Spur Economic Growth.” These recommendations not only strengthen and preserve retirement security for those workers currently paying into the system, for employers, and for retirees, the proposals also address the challenges facing multiemployer plans that the PBGC and other agencies have identified as likely to become insolvent in the near future, thereby impacting the stability of multiemployer plans in the future.

The situation for a small but significant percentage (7% to 10%) of multiemployer plans is urgent. The PBGC itself faces funding shortfalls and, absent Congressional intervention, eventual insolvency. To address the problems we face today and those on the horizon, the proposals from Solutions Not Bailouts benefit both the vast majority of plans that continue to recover from the great recession of 2008 and the minority of plans that, for a variety of reasons, will become insolvent in the long-run. These proposals strengthen the majority of plans that are not threatened and have successfully weathered the recent economic crises and, for multiemployer plans that are deeply troubled, they allow workers and retirees to maintain benefits above the PBGC guaranteed amount. The proposals also facilitate the development of new and innovative plan designs that will better enable the bargaining parties to adopt future plans tailored to their unique circumstances.

We believe that doing nothing is not an option. Millions of working class Americans rely on the retirement security provided by multiemployer plans. This approach to safeguarding multiemployer retirement security for the long-term is supported by both labor and business, preserves benefits, strengthens the system and, importantly, avoids the inevitability of insolvency that comes with inaction. We all know a bailout isn’t coming, and we aren’t asking for one. The Solutions Not Bailouts recommendations are self-help solutions, and we support them because we believe the private sector has an opportunity to fix this problem on its own.

We urge Congress to adopt Solutions Not Bailouts to preserve benefits, as well as strengthen and secure the current multiemployer system for the long term.

Sincerely,

[Your Name Here]

(Alternate Plan Language)

Dear Senator/Representative:

As the (name of office and organization) representing XXXX union (name of trade or union), I am concerned about the retirement security of my members and the potential uncertainty coming to the multiemployer pension plans as parts of the Pension Protection Act of 2006 (PPA) are scheduled to sunset next year. Put simply, even as our economy continues to recover, millions of workers and retirees could see the retirement benefits they have earned face serious threat if nothing is done to address these issues. We are not content to wait for plans to fail, for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) to become insolvent – which the Congressional Budget Office says could happen within the decade – or for a taxpayer bailout that we neither seek, nor expect.

To proactively address this problem our union joined a group of more than 40 labor and business stakeholders to form the Retirement Security Review Commission, a group whose goal was to recommend solutions supported by both management and labor that would strengthen the existing system for the long-term. The result of that collaboration was a report that contains our recommendations entitled “Solutions Not Bailouts: A Comprehensive Plan from Business and Labor to Safeguard Multiemployer Retirement Security, Protect Taxpayers and Spur Economic Growth.” These recommendations not only strengthen and preserve retirement security for those workers currently paying into the system, for employers, and for retirees. The proposal also addresses the challenges facing multiemployer plans that the PBGC and other agencies have identified as likely to become insolvent in the near future, thereby impacting the stability of multiemployer plans in the future.

Fortunately, our plan is not among the small percentage of critical “Red Zone” status plans that will require immediate intervention in order to preserve benefits. We, however, have joined with other unions and business stakeholders alike in supporting “Solutions Not Bailouts” because those plans in danger do need help, and as a multiemployer participant (and put in if the writer is a trustee or not), we recognize that the failure of one plan could have a ripple effect across the system. Additionally, under these recommendations, we will be able to take advantage of new plan designs that will make our entire system more stable in the future.

While some are trying to trivialize the situation these plans find themselves in, or are calling for the government to fully fund the PBGC as a way to address the problem, the Agency’s safety net is only available to plans which, by definition, have become insolvent. Even under existing law, this approach would require plan trustees to implement deep reductions in benefits for active employees, terminated inactive with vested rights to future benefits, and existing retirees in pay status. Under Solutions Not Bailouts, for plans that meet the conditions for relief, each of these groups would receive higher benefits than under current law.

We believe doing nothing is not an option. Millions of working class Americans rely on the retirement security provided by multiemployer plans. The Solutions Not Bailouts approach to safeguarding multiemployer retirement security for the long-term is supported by both labor and business, preserves benefits, strengthens the system and, importantly, avoids the inevitability of insolvency that comes with inaction. We all know a bailout isn’t coming, and we aren’t asking for one. The Solutions Not Bailouts recommendations are self-help solutions, and we support them because we believe the private sector has an opportunity to fix this problem on its own. We look forward to your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

[Your Name Here]

# Guidance on Writing and Submitting an Opinion Editorial (OpEd)

1. Review your local paper’s guidelines for publishing opinion edtiorials (OpEds) (limits on word count, format and methods to submit for publication). This information can be found online under the “Opinion” section of your paper’s web site.
2. Use your letter or OpEd to call attention to why it is important that Congress address pension reforms and what ‘doing nothing’ to secure multiemployer plans for the longterm means for you and your community.
3. Keep it brief and get right to the point. Use personal anecdotes when possible. There is a sample OpEd below that you can borrow from/use/modify.
4. Find the submission email address on your paper’s website and send it in.

# Sample OpEd - Protecting Retirement Security

For millions of workers, employers and retirees, the financial crisis is not over. The sponsors and participants of multiemployer pension plans face very real challenges every day, and some even face the threat of insolvency as we continue to recover from the Great Recession.

With the looming sunset of certain provisions of the Pension Protection Act of 2008 coming in just a matter of months, these unique pension plans, and those who use them, face uncertainty at a time when families and businesses are looking for reliable paths to retirement security. Making matters worse, the federal agency that secures the pensions may exhaust their funds within the decade unless Congress takes action.

For people like me, the consequences of inaction could be severe. That’s why, the employers who fund multiemployer pension plans, the workers who pay into them and the retirees who benefit from them all got together to come up with a self-help solution. More than 40 stakeholders from all sides spent 18 months crafting a series of proposals that will safeguard retirement security for multiemployer plan participants, protect taxpayers and spur economic growth. The end result? A set of recommendations called [*Solutions Not Bailouts*](http://www.solutionsnotbailouts.com)*.*

You don’t always hear about labor and management coming together, but this plan was proposed by labor and management, is for labor and management and it is designed to strengthen the system for the long-term. Now we need Congress to act on it.

Multiemployer pensions are unique in that they allow workers to move from job to job without having to stop and restart their retirement benefits. The vast majority of employers who fund these plans are small businesses. The *Solutions Not Bailouts* plan is not only necessary, but timely in order to protect retirees at risk while allowing both businesses and labor to develop innovative plan designs that will solidify and strengthen the fiscal future of their plans. For the minority of plans that are deeply troubled, where participant benefits are in jeopardy, *Solutions Not Bailouts* will provide tools that the trustees can use to avoid insolvency and preserve benefits to the greatest extent possible.

Under current law, troubled plans – and their pensioners – face automatic and drastic cuts. When the federal funding safety net – the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) – exhausts its multiemployer fund, those cuts will be even more severe. *Solutions Not Bailouts* will help those plans that were hit hardest by the economic downturn weather the storm and continue to provide benefits above what the PBGC provides. For the plans in good financial shape, these proposals give them tools to strengthen their footing for the future.

These proposals will ensure that multiemployer pension plans continue their decades-long mission of providing cost-effective and reliable retirement benefits to millions of working class Americans, while enabling the employers who fund them to remain strong contributors to the national economy.

Banking on a bailout from taxpayers, or burying our heads in the sand and hoping for the best are not long-term solutions to serious and complex problems. The hard truth is, for some plans, the danger is real. Inaction is not an option, nor is relying on taxpayers to shoulder the burden. While many will try to trivialize the situation in which these pension plans find themselves, there’s no getting around the fact that solving the problems these plans face will not be easy, or inexpensive. That’s why the *Solutions Not Bailouts* proposal makes sense. It not only has the backing of business and labor, it also provides retirement security without requiring a taxpayer bailout we can’t afford.

We need Congress to adopt these measures to preserve benefits as well as strengthen and secure the current multiemployer system for the future. These recommendations will allow multiemployer pension plans to not only survive in this difficult economic environment, but also achieve benefit security and preservation for decades to come.