



Association of Ameritech /SBC Retirees, Inc

Proudly representing retirees of the AT&T Midwest Region, SBC Midwest Region, Ameritech, and predecessor/successor Bell Companies of the New AT&T, located throughout the United States

Legislative Ledger

January 9, 2008 - EEOC Ruling Issued December 26, 2007

The EEOC website press release (www.eeoc.gov/press/12-26-07.html) contains, in part, the following:

EEOC MOVES TO PROTECT RETIREE HEALTH BENEFITS

Implementation of Final Rule Ensures Age Bias Law is No Barrier to Employer Insurance

“Implementation of this rule is welcome news for America’s retirees, whether young or old,” said Commission Chair Naomi C. Earp. “By this action, the EEOC seeks to preserve and protect employer-provided retiree health benefits which are increasingly less available and less generous. Millions of retirees rely on their former employer to provide health benefits, and this rule will help employers continue to voluntarily provide and maintain these critically important benefits in accordance with the law.”

AASBCR does not see the issue that way. AASBCR believes that without some level of protection actually written into this rule for the retiree class, companies will eliminate or dramatically reduce healthcare benefits for those on Medicare because there is no penalty for doing so. If they do continue coverage for retirees on Medicare they can legally discriminate on costs the way the present rule is written. AASBCR believes it would be a travesty if the rule is allowed to be implemented without a challenge. To that end, we are working with the National Retiree Legislative Network (NRLN) in Washington, DC and our fellow AT&T Retiree Coalition Members to counter this rule. AASBCR through the NRLN is supporting AARP’s legal appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court which is deliberating whether or not to hear the appeal.

Should the U.S. Supreme Court refuse to hear the case the NRLN will lobby Congress for legislative change to reverse the EEOC rule and restrict their latitude to make judgments like this "if deemed to be in the public interest." Congress threatened to do this earlier but may have to be reminded. AASBCR members must be prepared to take action if the NRLN requires our assistance contacting our congressmen.