



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

December 9, 2008 – Congress Passes Financial Industries Bailout Bill – Grass Roots Impact & Florida Senator Martinez, a prime example.

By now all have heard about Congress passing the Financial Industries Bailout bill entitled, Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008.

Some of us may have been in favor of the bailout bill while others may not have been. One can only speculate what would have happened if nothing was done to bail out banks. Perhaps the financial situation of workers/retirees would have worsened or perhaps not.

But, that isn't the AASBCR_{SM} message in this Legislative Ledger. The message is that contacting congressman and Senators on issues that are important to us does get their attention. GRASS ROOTS EFFORTS DO WORK! Relative to the bailout bill, members of Congress had their phones ringing and e-mails coming to their staff blasting them about this issue. (It was rumored that e-mail traffic was so heavy it shut down the government site for a little while.)

Suffice it to say, that this is the example of what we need to do to protect retiree benefits. We ALL need to ACTIVELY continue to contact our Washington representatives until they get the message that retiree benefits (Employer provided Healthcare and Pensions) are important to us and need to be protected from the same greed and mismanagement that has contaminated the financial banking industry. If they value our votes and wish to continue to represent us in Washington, then they need to listen to our concerns.

A Prime Example:

Recently AASBCR_{SM} told everyone about the EEOC ruling of December, 2007 that adversely affects healthcare benefits for retirees over 65 on Medicare. The NRLN has now initiated a call to action for all retirees in the state of Florida on this issue and has asked retirees to contact Senator Mel Martinez. Why? Because of the response to a



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letter that our President, Carole Lovell received from the Senator when she asked him to support overturning the latest EEOC ruling. Senator Martinez's response left a lot to be desired. Like many of our legislators he just doesn't understand the potential damage the EEOC ruling can cause. So, the Senator and his staff will have an opportunity to hear from our members as the Grass Roots Call to Action for All Florida retirees is underway. Its subject: Senator Mel Martinez Doesn't Recognize Dangers of EEOC Rule.

And, there may be other Senators or Congressmen out there who haven't responded satisfactorily to a retiree issue. AASBCRSM and the NRLN need to know that so all retirees in the Senator or Congressman's state or district can let them know when a retiree issue (like this one) is important for them to understand and properly address.

In his letter, Bill Kadereit of the NRLN stated, "I told Senator Martinez that the NRLN's position is that the EEOC has been hoodwinked by business interests into believing that by implementing this rule employers would not be as likely to eliminate all retiree health benefits or to reduce the benefits of younger retirees to be equal to those provided to their Medicare-eligible counterparts. Now companies can discriminate against retirees age 65 and older and they have retained the right to take back benefits from those under age 65. There is nothing in the EEOC rule that ensures employer-sponsored healthcare benefits for retirees under age 65. All retirees lose!"

Why mention this. Because, just as it took people to contact their members of Congress to address the bailout plans from their perspective, it will take retirees to contact their Congressmen and Senators to address the problems with the EEOC ruling, pension plan abuses, and, healthcare reform.

**Continue to stay informed and in contact with your representatives.
GRASS ROOTS EFFORTS DO WORK!**