



*United Association*  
of Journeymen and Apprentices  
of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry  
of the United States and Canada

Founded 1889

*Celebrating 125 Years*



General Office File Reference: WPH

December 10, 2014

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Support for Multiemployer Pension Reforms**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States, Canada and Australia and our 370,000 members, I urge your support of critical bipartisan reforms to the multi-employer defined benefit pension system that have been proposed by the Education and Workforce Committee before this session of Congress expires. The proposal, *Solutions Not Bailouts*, will help strengthen the multi-employer system by introducing new tools to better safeguard participants' benefits while strengthening plans for future generations of participants and employers—not to mention protecting taxpayers by avoiding a massive bailout that could cost billions.

Over 40 business and labor organizations, including the United Association, from across industries that rely on multi-employer plans worked very hard to develop the measures proposed in *Solutions Not Bailouts*. This proposal represents a careful balance of the interests of business and plan participants and their families with the goal of preserving reliable lifetime retirement benefits while reducing financial risk for those plans currently facing a very unstable future. Specifically, the proposal modifies the expiring Pension Protection Act (PPA) and introduces measures that will: (1) preserve and strengthen the current system; (2) help troubled plans avoid insolvency; and (3) put plans still recovering from the recession on firmer ground. It is important to note that the proposals are completely voluntary; all plan decisions will require buy-in from both labor and management, and no decisions can be made without both sides agreeing that they are in the best interest of plan participants. In regards to benefit suspension provisions for the most seriously troubled plans, all actions must meet both government *and* plan participant approval. This is the best guarantee that efforts to strengthen the multi-employer system do not cause unnecessary harm to workers and their families. For this reason, *Solutions Not Bailouts* enjoys broad support from both the labor and business community. In fact, no other solution has been proposed that offers the same level of security for both plan participants and contributing employers.

Further delay in implementing necessary pension reforms will only increase the burden on employers struggling to fund and extend pension plans and hurt working families who depend on multi-employer plans for reliable retirement income. It is absolutely critical that we move forward with legislation to address the challenges facing these plans so that we can continue to provide the hardworking men and women who make America strong with benefits that allow them to retire with dignity. While we remain concerned about the PBGC premium increase contained in the final legislative language, we believe that the pension protections afforded to 10 million multi-employer plan participants make this bill worthy of support. We strongly urge you to support the Kline/Miller Amendment for Multiemployer Pension Reform - *Solutions Not Bailouts* and take action on this before it is too late.

Sincerely yours,

William P. Hite  
General President

WPH:slg

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