



Wicker Seeks Answers for Mississippi's Delphi Retirees

Obama Administration Should Cooperate With Full Investigation Into Terminated Pensions

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When the federal government bailed out General Motors (GM), hundreds of Mississippians who worked for auto parts manufacturer Delphi saw their benefits and pensions severely reduced. Nationally, the devastating cuts affected 20,000 Delphi salaried retirees – in particular, those who had exercised their right not to join a labor union. Delphi retirees who were union members had their pensions made whole.

There is bipartisan support in Congress for a thorough investigation into GM's bankruptcy proceedings and whether political motivations led to the decision to terminate the pensions only of non-union Delphi workers. Instead of equal and fair treatment, these hardworking Americans were left behind, and they are right to demand answers.

E-mails Suggest Treasury Overstep

At the center of the scrutiny is whether the Obama Administration meddled in the daily operations of GM and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC), an independent federal agency that assumed trusteeship of the pension plans. According to federal law, authority related to pension decisions was entrusted to PBGC.

Recent news reports have revealed information suggesting that the Treasury Department played a greater role in the decision-making process to cut pensions for Delphi salaried workers. Published e-mails and documents obtained from PBGC appear to contradict sworn testimony and court filings by Administration officials about the pension agreement. Internal e-mails indicate Treasury representatives excluded PBGC staff from talks about the Delphi plan.

Holding the Administration Accountable

In 2008, I was one of 25 Senators to vote against the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP). The program allowed the federal government to become GM's largest shareholder and made every American taxpayer a financier of its bankruptcy. According to the latest Treasury estimates, taxpayers stand to lose more than \$25 billion in the auto industry bailout.

Americans deserve to know how their taxpayer dollars were used and whether politics led to the unjust decision to pick winners and losers among Delphi retirees. Legislation that I introduced in 2010 sought to answer these questions with an independent investigation by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office. Another analysis by the Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program is expected later this year.

Transparency Should Prevail

It is troubling that the Obama Administration continues to withhold information about the circumstances surrounding the Delphi decision. The President pledged to run a transparent Administration, and congressional requests for the full disclosure of documents and correspondence simply ask the President to make good on this pledge.

Like Americans across the country, non-union Delphi retirees have built their careers with the promise of a financially secure retirement. They earned their pensions working side by side with their union counterparts. They are entitled to a fair outcome.

President Obama seemed to agree in 2008 when he said, "If a company goes bankrupt, then workers need to be our top priority, not an afterthought." Unfortunately, not all retirees were treated as a top priority in the GM bailout.

If the President really wants to put workers first, then back-door decisions that undermine good and honest work cannot be tolerated. It is time for Delphi workers and their families to get the answers and equitable treatment that they deserve.

Source: [Senator Wicker release](#)

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