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Portman Demands Answers from Sec. Sebelius on Delphi Salaried Retirees' Healthcare

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-Ohio) submitted a question for the record to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius regarding the impact of the failed healthcare exchange rollout on Delphi Salaried Retirees. This latest problem for these workers follows the loss of a significant portion of their pension benefits, while other retirees from the same company received far better treatment.

Portman submitted the below question for the Congressional Record and hopes for a swift response from HHS Sec. Sebelius:

“I know that we have all heard stories of frustration about the technological failings of the Exchange portal, but I would like to highlight one particular group that the Administration should know well. These are the thousands of families of Delphi Salaried Retirees all across the country who have already lost up to 70 percent of their earned pensions due to the Administration picking winners and losers during the GM bankruptcy.

“These families are in a very tough situation, after losing so much of their pensions, and now looking at challenging health care decisions. They are trying to deal with health care deadlines, while comparing rates with a website that simply does not work.

“Many of these 20,000 Delphi salaried retirees and their families are unable to compare the health plans they are offered through the Delphi Salaried Retiree Association to coverage offered through the Exchange, because of the major technical issues of the Exchange.

“Many of these retirees have been in a panic because they were required to sign up for benefits through their Association by November 6 but due to the inability to compare coverage through Healthcare.gov many weren't able to make an educated decision. What do you recommend for these hard-working retirees

who are facing enrollment deadlines, and are simply unable to make educated choices?”

When Delphi’s defined benefit pension plan was terminated, Delphi workers lost an estimated 30 to 70 percent in benefits. The Auto Policy Task Force subsequently decided to “top-up” the pension benefits of certain retirees, not the 20,000 salaried retirees, including 1,500 salaried retirees in the Mahoning Valley. This has had a severe economic impact on thousands of retired Delphi salaried employees in Ohio. An economic impact study by Youngstown State University found that decreased retiree income and benefits will cost the Youngstown area about \$58 million per year in lost economic activity.

In September, Portman joined a bipartisan group of 19 members of the Ohio delegation [asking the President to review](#) the ongoing situation involving the receipt of reduced pension benefits by salaried retirees of Delphi Corporation.

In June 2013, Portman sent a [letter](#) to the Honorable Jack Lew, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, requesting an update on the Treasury Department’s review of why more than 20,000 Delphi salaried families – including thousands of Ohio families - unfairly lost their pensions during the General Motors (GM) bankruptcy while other workers at the same company received their full pensions and benefits package.

In May 2013, Portman joined Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Congressman Mike Turner (R-OH-10) in sending a [bicameral, bipartisan letter](#) to the Chairmen of the Senate and House Oversight Committees urging them to continue their Committees’ examinations of matters pertaining to the unjust termination of Delphi salaried retiree pensions. This push resulted in a special Congressional hearing in Dayton last week to explore these issues.

In March 2013, Portman and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) [called on the Obama Administration to meet with Delphi salaried retirees](#) and to pursue efforts that would restore the retirees’ pensions and benefits. In a letter to U.S. Department of Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew, the senators urged Lew to review the proposal submitted by the Delphi Salaried Retirees Association (DSRA) last summer and to pursue other solutions to ensure retirees’ receive the benefits they have earned that were lost through the bankruptcy of General Motors.

In February 2013, Portman [submitted questions for the Congressional Record](#) for the Senate Finance Committee hearing considering the nomination of Jacob Lew to serve as Treasury Secretary regarding the treatment of retired Delphi salaried workers during the General Motors bankruptcy.

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