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## [Weekly Column: New Year Brings New Concerns for Delphi Retirees](#)

Across the country, Americans are celebrating the promise of a new year. But for 20,000 families of Delphi salaried retirees that lost their pensions in 2009 because of the actions of the Obama Administration, their new year is starting out under a cloud.

In the summer of 2009, as the government took GM into bankruptcy, the Obama Administration terminated thousands of Delphi salaried retirees and their pensions. These 20,000 salaried retirees, ranging from shop-floor supervisors and salespeople to engineers and office managers, spent many years at Delphi, a major employer and economic engine in towns across Ohio from the Mahoning Valley to the Miami Valley. They earned their pensions the American way, through hard work and dedication. Because of one political decision, all that hard work vanished into thin air.

Now many of these families are struggling to make ends meet. Like so many Americans who continue to face challenges in this difficult economy, they have very little margin in their budgets for unexpected expenses. Many Delphi retirees and their families depend on the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC) to secure affordable health insurance. The HCTC was designed to help people who have experienced job loss and who, like former Delphi employees, have had their defined benefit pension plans taken over by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). Often the HCTC serves as an important bridge for older Americans until they become eligible for Medicare benefits, covering 72.5 percent of their costs. But on January 1, 2014, that tax credit expired.

This is just the latest blow to Delphi workers. 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, but not the 20,000 salaried retirees, including 5,000 in Ohio. Of the 5,000 Delphi salaried retirees and their families in our state, about 1,500 are in the Mahoning Valley, 2,000 are in the Dayton area, and a majority of the remaining 1,500 are in Columbus and Sandusky.

The federal government has failed these retirees too many times already, but hopefully, some help may be on the way. Even in a politically divided Washington, I was able to rally bipartisan support for my efforts to extend the HCTC for Delphi workers and other struggling Americans. Before Congress adjourned in late December, I secured a commitment from the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee on which I serve to work toward extending the HCTC when Congress renews Trade Adjustment Assistance early this year. This is the first commitment from Senate leaders to move toward extending the HCTC, and I will continue to work tirelessly with impacted Ohioans to ensure that this is a promise kept.

Even if we are able to restore the HCTC for these hard-working families, **it doesn't begin to make up for what they lost as a result of the policies of this Administration.** When Washington picks winners and losers, the tendency is to focus on those who benefit from those decisions. But people like the workers at Delphi don't have lobbyists in Washington. **In many ways, their story represents Washington at its worst.** They deserve better from their government, and their story should **serve as a lesson and a warning to us all.**

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<http://www.portman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2014/1/new-year-brings-new-concerns-for-delphi-retirees>