

July 8, 2020

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer:

As leaders of union locals and councils in New York State, we commend you on your steadfast leadership for our country and our great state, particularly in these challenging times. We write to you today about a pension issue that is critical to us, our members, and the communities they serve. The Giving Retirement Options to Workers (GROW) Act would do significant harm to our members' pensions and we urge you to ensure that any future legislative package does not include this anti-worker legislation.

Our members and retirees depend on multiemployer pensions for their families' retirement security. The GROW Act, which was included in the House-passed HEROES bill, is bad for workers, retirees, and unions. This legislation is merely a tool for employers to cut their pension costs and shift all of the risk unto workers and retirees while weakening existing plans at the same time.

The GROW Act changes the law to allow multiemployer pension plans to divert money from an existing plan to create a new composite pension plan. This weakens the existing plan and leaves neither plan—the existing plan, nor the composite plan—with enough money to pay promised benefits for workers and retirees. If Congress had already passed the GROW Act and it was law now, workers in a previously healthy multiemployer pension plan that converted to a composite plan would face draconian benefit cuts.

Composite plans would also make it easier for employers to withdraw from existing multiemployer pension plans without paying their fair share. The GROW Act would eliminate withdrawal liability for composite plans, and it would dramatically reduce the cost of withdrawing from an existing plan. Composite plans would also be exempt from paying Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) premiums, which would leave workers without protection and contribute to PBGC insolvency.

We urge you to ensure that the GROW Act is not included in any future legislative package. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Neil Dudich, Eastern Executive Director, DGA
James Conigliaro, General Vice President, IAMAW Eastern Territory

Norm Shreve, Acting Directing Business Representative, IAMAW District Lodge 15
Ron Warner, Directing Business Representative, IAMAW District Lodge 65
James J. Claffey, Jr., President, IATSE Local One
Jason Caccavo, President, IATSE Local 4
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Gary Bonker, Business Manager, IBEW Local 10
Kevin Casey, Business Manager, IBEW Local 25
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Michael Gaiser, Business Manager, IBEW Local 41
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David Wilkinson, Business Manager, IBEW Local 106
Michael Mastropietro, Business Manager, IBEW Local 236
John Scherrer, Business Manager, IBEW Local 237
Todd Bruer, Business Manager, IBEW Local 241
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Kelvin Herrala, Business Manager, IBEW Local 325
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Pat Guidice, Business Manager, IBEW Local 1049
Ralph Avigliano, Business Manager, IBEW Local 1212
Mark Lawrence, Business Manager, IBEW Local 1249
William Brown, Business Manager, IBEW Local 2032
Steven Merrill, Business Manager, IBEW Local 2084
Barbara Carson, Business Manager, IBEW Local 2213
John Bulgaro, President, IBT Joint Council 18, and President, IBT Local 294
George Harrigan, President, IBT Joint Council 46, and Secretary-Treasurer, IBT Local 449
Paul Markwitz, President, IBT Local 118
Greg Floyd, President, IBT Local 237
Barry Russell, Secretary-Treasurer, IBT Local 445
Mike Hogan, Business Manager/Secretary Treasurer, IUPAT New York District Council 4
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Jeffrey Bennett, Chief Deputy General Counsel & Executive Director, SAG-AFTRA New York Local
Kyle Bragg, President, SEIU 32BJ
George Gresham, President, SEIU 1199

cc: The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senator for New York
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate