



**INTERNATIONAL
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WORKERS®**

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LONNIE R. STEPHENSON
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February 16, 2018

VIA EMAIL

To: All Members of the United States Senate

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 775,000 active and retired members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I am writing to urge you to co-sponsor the “Butch Lewis Act of 2017,” S. 2147. The Butch Lewis Act of 2017 would provide long-term, low-interest loans to multiemployer defined benefit plans, avoiding harmful cuts to retirement benefits. The bill has a House companion, H.R. 4444, “The Rehabilitation for Multiemployer Pensions Act.” Collectively these bills have wide-spread support from members of Congress representing tens of millions of Americans.

Retirement security has always been a priority of unions and pensions have figured prominently in the collective bargaining process for decades. Approximately 10 million workers and their families are covered by multiemployer pension plans.

Multiemployer pensions, administered by joint labor management committees, funded in part by negotiated employer contributions, form the backbone of the IBEW’s retirement safety net. An economic downturn or period of high unemployment could be detrimental to a small multiemployer plan. The Butch Lewis Act would create the Pension Rehabilitation Administration within the Treasury Department, to permit qualified multiemployer plans to access low-cost 30-year loans to protect retiree benefits and allow trustees time to improve the plan’s financial stability.

A pension is a promise made by an employer to a future retiree. I urge you to contact Mr. Gideon Bragin in Senator Brown’s office (Gideon_Bragin@brown.senate.gov) for additional information and to co-sponsor the Butch Lewis Act of 2017. If a pension is a promise made by an employer to a future retiree, S. 2147 will help insure employers are able to keep their word.

Sincerely yours,

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

LRS:lgd

