

March 28, 2022

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady,

On behalf of the Pension Rights Center, a national consumer organization committed to protecting and promoting the retirement security of workers, retirees, and their families, we thank you for addressing some key consumer issues as part of the bipartisan Securing a Strong Retirement Act of 2022.

In particular, we applaud the bill's establishment of the Retirement Savings Lost and Found to create an online searchable registry of pension plans to help individuals search for "lost plans" when companies move or change corporate structures. The Pension Rights Center and affiliated pension counseling projects across the country hear from hundreds of people each year who are unable to find their plans and have no idea how to apply for their pensions. The Lost and Found, housed in the Department of Labor, will be an important tool to help people find and receive their benefits.

The bill will also provide clear and equitable rules regulating the practice of recoupment, where plans accidentally overpay individuals, then demand repayment -- often with interest -- years later when they catch the mistake. These repayments can be substantial, sometimes reducing future benefits to zero, and causing great hardship to retirees who depended on the pension amount they were receiving. The bill clarifies that plans are not required to recoup past overpayments. It also provides new protections for retirees when a plan properly proceeds with recoupment, including limits on benefit reductions and rules prohibiting a plan from seeking recoupment if the plan's initial error occurred more than three years before the recoupment process begins.

The Pension Rights Center also supports provisions that call on relevant agencies to review and report to Congress on the methods plans use to furnish disclosures, and to assess whether participants and beneficiaries are receiving, accessing and retaining them. Finally we support provisions that take steps to address retirement inequities facing women by increasing coverage for part-time workers and also support the enhancement of the Savers Credit.

Thank you for your leadership in introducing and moving forward these provisions to protect consumers.

Sincerely,



Karen Friedman
Executive Director



Norman Stein
Senior Policy Advisor