

1 **END THE GARNISHMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY TO PAY STUDENT-LOAN DEBT**

2
3 WHEREAS, over the past several decades, employers nationwide have been
4 eliminating defined pension plans resulting in 18% of private sector employees
5 having a defined benefit pension in 2015 compared to 35% in 1990 and 28% of
6 overall employees in 2015 having a defined benefit pension compared to 74% in
7 1975;ⁱ and

8 WHEREAS, the median savings of households age 55-65 is just \$12,000;ⁱⁱ and

9 WHEREAS, without a pension plan or accumulated savings, American
10 workers are increasingly retiring to precarious circumstances, relying upon Social
11 Security to stave off poverty; and

12 WHEREAS, Social Security Benefits were first taxed in 1984 and the age for
13 full retirement benefits was raised from 65 to the current 66 as a result of
14 legislation passed by Congress in 1983 and will eventually be raised to 67;ⁱⁱⁱ and

15 WHEREAS, prior to retirement, many seniors had assumed debt in the form
16 of student loans in order to pay for their own education or that of a child or
17 grandchild; and

18 WHEREAS, senior citizen student debt increased from \$2.8 billion in 2005 to
19 \$18.2 billion in 2013;^{iv} and

20 WHEREAS, student loans are almost impossible to be forgiven even in
21 bankruptcy, and interest rates cannot be easily reduced and

22 WHEREAS, in 2013, the federal government garnished \$150 million from the
23 monthly benefits of 36,000 seniors 65 and older, further cutting a hole in what is
24 supposed to be their safety net;^v

25 WHEREAS, this number is expected to grow as more baby boomers retire:

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27 **RESOLVED, that the AFT join the Alliance for Retired Americans in**
28 **calling on the Obama administration to end the practice of garnishing Social**
29 **Security to pay student-loan debt.**

ⁱ Wiatrowski, William. "The last private industry pension plans: a visual essay," Washington DC, 2012: Bureau of Labor Statistics. Web.

Perez, Thomas and Borzi, Phyllis. "Private Pension Plan Bulletin Historical Tables and Graphs 1975-2013," Washington DC, 2015: U.S. Department of Labor. Web.

"Table 2. Retirement benefits: Access, participation, and take-up rates, private industry workers, National Compensation Survey, March 2015," *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 2015. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2015/ownership/private/table02a.pdf>; Accessed: 6/6/16.

"Table 2. Retirement benefits: Access, participation, and take-up rates, civilian workers, National Compensation Survey, March 2015," *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 2015. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2015/ownership/civilian/table02a.pdf>; Accessed: 6/6/16.

ⁱⁱ Rhee, Nari. "The Retirement Savings Crisis: Is It Worse Than We Think?" Washington DC, 2013: National Institute on Retirement Security. Web.

ⁱⁱⁱ Altman, Nancy and Kingson, Eric. "Social Security Works: Why Social Security Isn't Going Broke and How Expanding It Will Help Us All," New York: New York Press, 2015. Print.

^{iv} "Older Americans: Inability to Repay Student Loans May Affect Financial Security of a Small Percentage of Retirees," U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO-14-866T, September 10, 2014. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-14-866T>

v "Older Americans Inability to Repay Student Loans May Affect Financial Security of a Small Percentage of Retirees," (Publication No. GAO-14-866T), Government Accountability Office. (2014). Washington, DC: Web.

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