



## general motors retirees association

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President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am honored to serve as President of the General Motors Retirees Association, an organization devoted to the fair treatment of General Motors retirees. While the well-being of all retirees is the concern of GMRA, I write today in support of the 122,000 GM retirees and their surviving spouses whose interests are not represented by the United Auto Workers. On behalf of those non-UAW retirees, I wish both to thank you and to ask for your assistance.

Initially, I wish to express my gratitude to you and to the Congressional leadership for your decision to support the restructuring of General Motors and the American automotive industry. The success of General Motors played a crucial role in the emergence of the United States as the world's leading economy of the twentieth century, and I share your belief that America in the twenty-first century cannot support a thriving middle class and meet its energy challenges unless there is a thriving American automotive industry. We GM retirees remain optimistic about the future of General Motors, a company to which we already have given decades of our labor and loyalty.

In addition to offering our thanks for your vision, I also write to express concern about the current GM bankruptcy filing and what will come after bankruptcy for the "new" General Motors. For several months General Motors, members of your administration, and representatives of the United Auto Workers have been in discussions about GM's future. The purpose of those discussions has been to devise a plan that would restore General Motors to profitability while providing some protection for various GM stakeholders, including current GM workers and the GM retirees. Such talks were and are both necessary and urgent.

In the ongoing discussion of GM and its future, however, a very large group of GM retirees has received very little attention. While the United Auto Workers has ably represented the majority of GM retirees, neither the UAW nor any other organization has advocated for the non-UAW retirees in the ongoing discussion about GM's future. This omission has left 122,000 retirees and their surviving spouses—a group of people larger than the entire population of Peoria, Illinois, or Abilene, Texas—without representation in discussions that literally will determine their futures. This lack of representation might explain why your administration has supported the reduction of certain GM retiree benefits by two-thirds or more, in a fashion that for many retirees will lead to economic disaster or endanger their health.

To be clear, GM retirees understand that shared sacrifice is required if GM is to return to profitability. GM retirees are willing to do their part. But the benefit reductions now being planned for non-UAW retirees would go far beyond shared sacrifice to impose an unreasonable and punitive burden on the sick and elderly. These reductions would weigh far more heavily on non-UAW retirees than on their UAW counterparts, despite the fact that many non-UAW, salaried retirees earned incomes equal to or less than their UAW colleagues prior to retirement.

The current GM proposal for benefit reductions could push thousands of retirees to the brink of their own financial meltdown. As many retirees have explained to me, they already are at the point of having to choose between purchasing

groceries or filling their prescriptions. These GM retirees and their families are not living in the lap of luxury. After seeing their benefits reduced 28 times since 1993, many of them simply can't afford another series of drastic benefit cuts.

In response to the retiree benefit reductions proposed by General Motors and, presumably, with the support of your administration, the General Motors Retirees Association has a plan for fair treatment of all GM retirees in the transition to the new, post-bankruptcy General Motors. The GMRA plan, included here and also described on our Web site at [www.gmret.org](http://www.gmret.org), would result in substantial cost savings for the new GM while avoiding the most severe consequences for non-UAW retirees under the current benefit-reduction proposal. Unlike GM's current proposal, the GMRA plan would give retirees an opportunity to plan for the future and would enhance their ability to engage GM in substantive discussions about future changes to retiree benefits.

The treatment of GM retirees is no ordinary business decision. A company, a nation, will be judged by how it treats the old, the sick, and the vulnerable. When the federal government is the majority owner of the new GM, we must look to you and to Congress to ensure that GM retirees are dealt with fairly. Rightly or wrongly, your administration is now to a significant degree accountable for the future treatment of GM retirees.

As the legal process moves forward and the GM bankruptcy moves to a rapid conclusion, now is the time to work toward a fair resolution of GM retiree concerns. We invite you and your representatives to review the GMRA plan and to consider how all parties might work together for the common good.

Sincerely,

John D. Christie /s/

John D. Christie  
President