

“EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS,  
THE PENSION RIGHTS CENTER HAS BEEN  
THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS.”

*U.S. Representative George Miller*

PENSION RIGHTS CENTER  
*Celebrating Thirty Years*

“THE PENSION RIGHTS CENTER IS ALWAYS  
FRONT-AND-CENTER IN CONGRESSIONAL POLICY  
DEBATES AS THEY AFFECT CONSUMERS.”

*U.S. Senator Charles Grassley*

# HIGHLIGHTS

## *Pension Rights Center Highlights 1976 - 2006*

In 1974, the U.S. Congress passed the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), a landmark private pension reform law hailed as “the greatest piece of social legislation enacted since Social Security.”

1976

To help ensure that the voices of employees and retirees are heard in the regulatory process, Karen Ferguson launches the **Pension Rights Center** with a \$10,000 start-up grant from Ralph Nader.

1977

The Center successfully petitions the Labor Department to require pension plans to provide employees with a statement of their legal rights and to provide them with summaries of their plans' finances.

1978

The Center forms a **Citizens' Commission on Pension Policy** that effectively watchdogs a presidential commission, convenes a national citizens' conference, and develops its own “Blueprint for Pension Reform.”

1980

The Center persuades Congress to preserve critical pension insurance protections for tens of thousands of retirees and older employees when it enacts the Multiemployer Pension Plan Amendments Act of 1980.

1981

The Center creates the **Women's Pension Project** to combat poverty among older women by working for fairer pension policies for divorced and widowed homemakers and working women.

1983

Phil Donahue focuses national attention on pension problems by featuring Center staff on his popular television talk show, along with a widow and retirees who had been unfairly denied pensions.

1984

A coalition of women's and retiree groups led by the Center wins passage of the Retirement Equity and Civil Service Spouse Retirement Equity Acts, which provide benefits to millions of women.

1986

The Women's Pension Project, working with women's and retiree groups, wins passage of key provisions in the Tax Reform Act of 1986 that ensure employees are able to earn pensions faster and more fairly.

# 1987

1987

A major lawsuit initiated by the Center results in the restoration of benefits for more than 20,000 retirees whose pensions had been improperly reduced by the federal pension insurance program.

1988

Through a series of pension law seminars and outreach activities, the Center develops the **National Pension Lawyers Network**, a free referral service to help individuals find legal assistance.

1989

The Center's **Pensioners Empowerment Project** brings retirees from around the country together to campaign successfully for cost of living increases and against the "raiding" of their pension funds.

1990

Soon after NBC News airs "The Pension Cookie Jar," a white paper featuring Center staff and the efforts of activists to challenge pension plan reversions, Congress passes a law to curb this practice.

1991

*Your Pension Rights at Divorce: What Women Need to Know* is recognized as an "extremely valuable" book by the *Washington Post*, members of Congress, legal experts, and women's organizations.

1992

Concerned about the lack of help for people with pension problems, Congress authorizes the U.S. Administration on Aging to establish a **Pension Counseling and Information Demonstration Program**.

1995

The Center's *Pensions in Crisis* is described by the *New York Times* as a "practical primer for employees" that "deftly delineates the pension choices" and by *Library Journal* as "enlightening" and "powerful."

1996

The **Coalition for Retirement Security**, started by the Center, allows grassroots activists campaigning for pension justice to share creative strategies, support each other's causes, and win unprecedented victories.

# 1996

1997

1997

At the Center's **Pension Assistance Summit**, funded by the Retirement Research Foundation and the Labor Department, government officials join pension counselors in recommending an expanded pension help network.

2000

Through Capitol Hill events and media strategies highlighting the "employee pension revolution," the Center helps employees of major corporations convince their employers to rescind pension cutbacks.

2001

With a grant from the Ford Foundation, the Center launches the **Conversation on Coverage**, which brings together a wide range of experts to develop common-ground proposals for increasing pensions and savings.

2002

The Center's **Enron Action Initiative** plays a key role in highlighting the retirement security problems resulting from the collapse of Enron, shaping proposed solutions, and helping people get back their money.

2003

Administration on Aging funding allows the Center to create the **National Pension Assistance Resource Center** to increase support for the counseling projects, and begin developing a PensionHelp America web site.

2004

At a National Policy Forum, the Conversation on Coverage's three Working Groups unveil carefully crafted interim proposals for innovative pension plan designs and new kinds of retirement savings structures.

2005

Citing the Center as a "national treasure" that works tirelessly on behalf of older Americans, The Atlantic Philanthropies awards the Center a major grant to build organizational capacity to face future challenges.

2006

The Center's work with grassroots, women's and retiree groups results in critical protections in the Pension Protection Act that will prevent unfair pension cutbacks for certain older employees and widows.

2006

# WHAT'S NEXT

## *What's Next for PRC*

The challenges presented by today's changing pension landscape are greater than ever before. With your help, we will move forward to address these challenges, both at the public policy level and through direct assistance. Here are some of our ambitious plans for the coming year:

The Conversation on Coverage, an unprecedented public policy initiative, has generated innovative proposals to expand pensions and savings for millions of American workers. The next step is to release the final recommendations to policymakers and the public and to work with Conversation partners to begin the task of securing their implementation and spark a broader dialogue.

The National Pension Assistance Resource Center provides technical support to the Administration on

Aging's Pension Counseling and Information Program, which provides critical help to individuals in 25 states. In the coming year, we will work to expand the program to the entire country. To complement the counseling program, we will also launch PensionHelp America, a comprehensive resource for those searching online for assistance with pension problems.

To strengthen the Center's public policy activities, we will establish the Robert M. Ball - Lisle C. Carter Retirement Policy Institute. The Institute will identify and address inequities, strengthen our grassroots infrastructure, and shape solutions to long-term problems.

Given the multitude of income security issues facing current and future retirees, the Pension Rights Center cannot rest on its past accomplishments. Your contribution is essential!

### THE PENSION RIGHTS CENTER TEAM

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*Thank You for Your Support*

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