

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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August 2, 2010

The Honorable Charles Boustany
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Boustany:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, thanks you for introducing H.R. 5853, the "Fiscal Responsibility and Retirement Security Act of 2010," which would protect taxpayers from the potential fiscal consequences of the new CLASS Act entitlement. At a time of dangerous budget deficits and a myriad of new taxes, the country can ill afford to create a new entitlement program.

The bill would increase oversight of the CLASS program and require actuarial soundness to be confirmed before final implementation of the program, as well as a vote in Congress specifically on the new entitlement. In addition, H.R. 5853 would require more meaningful notice to potential enrollees about the program's risks and fiscal implications.

Perhaps more importantly, the bill would prevent the government from collecting CLASS premiums until the program's governing regulations are finalized. This is critical, especially considering the flood of regulations required by other more immediate provisions in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The unsuitably close deadline between regulations being finalized and when employers would begin offering and enrolling their employees could have a harmful effect.

Further, the bill would prevent a CLASS bailout by forcing the program to sunset if its funding becomes insufficient. This is a critical safeguard needed to ensure fiscal responsibility and prevent a taxpayer bailout of an entitlement program that the Congressional Budget Office has suggested is unsustainable.

The Chamber appreciates your continuing efforts to protect the retirement security of American workers and to move the federal government toward greater fiscal responsibility.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten