

Margaret L. Baptiste
National President

Joseph A. Beaudoin
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Nathaniel L. Brown
National Secretary

Richard C. Ostergren
National Treasurer

September 23, 2009

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
2354 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel:

On behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I am writing to endorse H.R. 3631, the “Medicare Premium Fairness Act,” which you and Reps. Henry A. Waxman, Fortney “Pete” Stark, Frank Pallone, Chris Van Hollen and Dina Titus have introduced to protect all Medicare beneficiaries from an increase in their Part B premium in 2010 when they are unlikely to receive any cost of living adjustment (COLA).

Under current federal law, about 75 percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not have to pay for the increase in Part B premiums in any year when they receive no Social Security COLA. However, there are four groups of older Americans who are **not** protected by the ‘hold harmless’ provision, including over a million federal, state and local government retirees who are not eligible to receive Social Security benefits. Absent a change in law, they would not only have to pay the higher Part B premiums without a COLA, but also absorb the costs of other Medicare beneficiaries currently ‘held harmless.’

We support your bill because it shields all older Americans from the Part B premium increase in 2010, including government retirees who are not eligible for Social Security. That means no one will pay the Part B increase next year. We appreciate that the legislation is fully financed through the Medicare Improvement Fund.

NARFE applauds you and Reps. Waxman, Stark, Pallone, Van Hollen and Titus for protecting all retirees – public and private – from premium increases in Medicare in a year when they are unlikely to receive the inflation protection needed to shoulder the rate hike. For that reason, we urge your colleagues to vote for this important legislation when it is considered by the House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret L. Baptiste". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Margaret L. Baptiste
President

**National Active and Retired
Federal Employees Association**

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