

January 25, 2012

Congressman Bobby Schilling

Testimony before the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy  
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

Chairman Ross, Ranking Member Lynch and members of the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, U.S. Postal Service and Labor Policy:

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the issue of pensions for Members of Congress and in particular, H.R. 2397 the Congressional Retirement Age Act. This is bipartisan, money saving legislation that provides an opportunity for Congress to lead by example.

In Congress we often talk about what we can do today to make a better tomorrow for our grandchildren. To achieve this, I think we're going to have to make some tough decisions and some easy decisions. The Congressional Retirement Age Act represents a small, common-sense step we can take today towards re-evaluating the pensions that Members of Congress are eligible to receive.

When I ran for office, I made a contract with the people of the 17<sup>th</sup> District of Illinois. One of the elements of this contract was to reject the congressional pension. This is a personal decision rooted in the belief that our founders did not set Congress up to be a career. I am not here today to preach at anyone. My goal is to advocate for a good policy change.

As you know, Members of Congress are eligible to receive a pension at age 62 after five years of federal service. However, if a member has served for 25 years, they can receive a pension at age 50. I can tell you that I have talked to many constituents about this issue and am hard pressed to recall one person that believes Congress should receive a pension, let alone as early as age 50. This especially rings true when you consider that the earliest that folks we represent back home can receive Social Security benefits is age 65.

The first bill I introduced as a member of Congress, H.R. 2397, simply ties a member of Congress' eligibility to receive pension benefits to the Social Security retirement age. Regardless of whether or not you believe Congress should be getting a pension, I hope that we can all agree that Members who do elect to receive pension benefits, should not be able to do so before their constituents can access Social Security benefits.

This is a truly bipartisan effort with 26 cosponsors in the House. Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio has spearheaded this effort over in the Senate. The Congressional Retirement Age Act has the support of the National Taxpayers Union and the Taxpayers Protection Alliance. According to a preliminary CBO staff estimate, this legislation would save to \$10 to \$15 million over ten years. This is real money and at a time when we are facing a national debt of more than \$15 trillion, all cost savings count.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this legislation today. I would also like to thank Chairman Ross and Congressman Chaffetz for cosponsoring H.R. 2397. I would welcome the support of all members of Congress on this bill. I look forward to working together and hope that we can advance the Congressional Retirement Age Act.

Bobby Schilling  
Member of Congress

## Biography

Congressman Bobby Schilling is a husband, father, and small business owner born and raised in Rock Island, Illinois. A lifelong Illinois resident, he and his wife Christie recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. They are parents to 10 children and grandparents to two granddaughters.

Bobby and his family own and operate Saint Giuseppe's Heavenly Pizzeria in Moline. His experience as a small business owner shapes his current understanding of government and its purpose.

Prior to opening the pizzeria, Bobby worked as a machine operator and was a member of the United Paper Workers Union, Local 191. He later worked for a number of years in the financial services industry.

With his business, Bobby has experienced first-hand how inefficient and ineffective government can be. He knows that when we villainize business owners and entrepreneurs, we hamper their ability to create jobs and grow our economy. He decided to get involved and try to make a difference.

Bobby was elected to serve as the Representative for the 17th Congressional District of Illinois on November 2, 2010. He serves the interests of his district on the House Armed Services Committee, the Agriculture Committee, and the Committee on Small Business.

The 17th Congressional District of Illinois encompasses 23 counties and stretches from the Quad Cities down along the Mississippi River all the way to Grafton. Heading south along the Mississippi, the district includes Dallas City, Quincy, and Hamburg, before bearing east through Carlinville, Springfield, and Decatur. The 17th District also includes towns such as Galesburg, Macomb, and Canton.

The district features the Rock Island Arsenal, the largest employer in the Quad Cities with approximately 8,600 workers. Further, its business supports more than 14,000 additional jobs in the surrounding area. The Rock Island Arsenal houses approximately 50 Department of Defense organizations, including the Joint Manufacturing Technology Center, and its dynamic workforce is unlike any other throughout the country.

The 17th District is also home to the world headquarters of large manufacturing employer John Deere, and according to the 2007 United States Department of Agriculture Ag Census is home to 15,364 farm operators and 10,528 farms, covering 3.8 million acres. The district ranks 37th out of 435 in the value of agriculture products sold, 14th in grain and oilseed production, and 20th in the number of hogs and pigs.