

U.S. Rep. Kind: Landmark bipartisan retirement legislation passes House, moves to Senate

Posted on Thursday, May 23, 2019

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Contact: Aaron White

Phone: 202-225-5506

Aaron.White@mail.house.gov

WASHINGTON – Today, the House of Representatives passed the *SECURE Act*, a bipartisan landmark retirement package, with overwhelming support (417 yeas/3 nays). The bill will help Wisconsinites – regardless of where they work – better save for retirement. The bill included several provisions authored by U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, including provisions to allow small businesses to pool retirement accounts, and reduce pension premiums for cooperatives and charities. It also repeals a tax hike families of fallen Servicemembers (Gold Star Families) faced this tax year as a consequence of the hastily-passed GOP tax plan in 2017.

“As a new generation of Wisconsinites prepare to enter retirement, it’s clear that financial security in the golden years of life is out of reach for too many in our state. Today, the House took action by passing the *SECURE Act*, which contains priorities I authored making it easier for Wisconsinites to save for retirement – no matter where they work. I’m proud to see the *SECURE Act* pass with such broad bipartisan support, and call on the Senate to act quickly so this bill can become law,” said Rep. Ron Kind.

The *Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act* will directly benefit small businesses, cooperatives and charities in Wisconsin’s Third Congressional District, including the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association.

Among other provisions, the bill would immediately reduce pension premiums for cooperatives, saving their members in Wisconsin over \$700,000 annually.

“Because of the strength of our network, electric co-op retirement plans pose little risk of default. Yet we are required to pay insurance premiums as if we are a high-risk venture,” said Stephen Freese, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association President & CEO. “When we overpay these premium costs, we take money away from our core mission as co-ops—member benefits and services. Ron Kind’s bill will save Wisconsin co-ops in the NRECA pension plan over \$700,000 this year, and we’re thankful that his leadership has brought this important bill to the House floor for a vote.”

This legislation contains a number of provisions to make it easier for families to save for retirement – no matter where they work – but focuses on two core provisions to expand retirement security for workers at small business and cooperatives or charities. First, it would immediately and permanently reduce pension premiums of cooperatives and charities, and also create a system for small businesses to pool retirement accounts called Open Multiple Employer Plans (MEPs). These two provisions would (taken together) make saving for retirement more affordable for workers in a wide range of occupations nationwide.

In Wisconsin alone, 1.2 million Wisconsinites are employed by a small businesses, which often find retirement plans prohibitively expensive. By pooling resources, small businesses can reduce the costs for workers of saving for retirement. Rep. Kind first introduced bipartisan legislation proposing Open MEPs in 2008.

The *SECURE Act* also includes the *Gold Star Family Tax Relief Act*, which will repeal a tax hike forced on survivors of fallen servicemembers requiring them to pay thousands of additional dollars in taxes on survivor benefits. The *Gold Star Family Tax Relief Act* would classify survivor benefits as earned income, reducing the tax burden for Gold Star Families. Additionally, the *SECURE Act* corrects the unfair taxation of low income student who receive loans or grants for their college education.

The SECURE Act is supported by: AARP, Dairyland Power, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, SEIU, Church Alliance, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts of America, National Association of Women Business Owners, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, TIAA, Air Line Pilots of Association, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association, the Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement, AALU, ACLI, and more.