

# FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION



**LOCAL No. 36**  
**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION**  
**of FIRE FIGHTERS**



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April 6, 2015

Ms. Nani A. Coloretti  
Assistant Secretary for Management  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Ms. Coloretti:

This letter is written on behalf of DC Fire Fighters Association, Local 36 (Local 36) and the Retired Firefighters Association of Washington, DC (RFA) regarding recent annuity reductions. The changes will impact thousands of retirees, which has caused a great amount of concern.

Local 36 and RFA represent over four thousand (4,000) fire fighters who faithfully served the District of Columbia. Former and current District of Columbia fire fighters were and are committed to protect life and property in the city. For public sector employees, the promise of a defined benefit pension plan is a benefit that attracts and retains employees.

The annuity reductions made is a direct attack on the commitment that was made to the brave men and woman who have served the District of Columbia. Of the four thousand fire fighters who were and are a part of Local 36, there are approximately half who are retired and receive the retirement benefits they earned and an equal number who are currently contributing to the existing retirement fund.

It is the position of both Local 36 and the RFA that the recent changes are a violation of the promise made to the men and women who have served this proud city. In a letter from the U.S. Treasury dated January 23, 2015, our members were informed their monthly annuities would be reduced. Calculation errors made by the Government as far back as 1974 are the basis for the reduction and those who rely on their monthly annuities are expected to offset those mistakes.

Since our members have received the reduction letter, Local 36 and the RFA have been attempting to assist our members. However, communicating changes to our members has been problematic. First of which, is trying to explain why retirement reductions are implemented

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because of Government calculation mistakes that date back forty (40) years. Second, we have been unable to obtain a complete contact list to ensure that everyone understands what has occurred and the ability to ensure that all affected members have the knowledge to exercise their appeal rights.

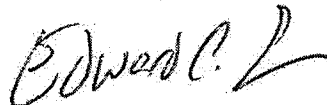
Upon review of the available data, there are a number of questions and concerns we have. Local 36 and RFA believes there is a degree of inconsistency in the interpretation of the laws and direction, mathematical and calculation issues, and the amount of debt owed. As you could very well imagine, this has been cause for a great deal of concern to both active and retired fire fighters. There is a significant number of retirees who are reliant on the fixed annuity they have received for the last 20, 30 or 40 years. Now they are suddenly expected to absorb a reduction in that annuity which will cause significant hardship.

In an attempt to address this very serious issue as well as to get accurate facts to our members and quell the rumors, Local 36 and RFA leaders are respectfully requesting a meeting to discuss these issues.

Sincerely,



Joseph L. O'Neil  
President  
Retired Firefighters  
(410) 956-2687



Edward C. Smith  
President

cc: Jacob J. Lew, Treasury Secretary  
Senator Ben Cardin  
Congresswoman Donna Edwards  
Congressman Steny Hoyer  
Senator Barbara Mikulski  
Congressman Chris Van Hollen  
Harold Shaitberger, President, IAFF  
Bill Taylor, 4<sup>th</sup> District V.P., IAFF