

CFP BOARD

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

January 7, 2026

Chairman Rick Allen U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee's Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee 2176 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515	Ranking Member Mark DeSaulnier U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee's Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee 2176 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
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Re: January 7, 2026 Hearing: Modernizing Retirement Policy for Today's Workforce

Chairman Allen, Ranking Member DeSaulnier, and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to submit this statement for the record on behalf of CFP Board, the professional body that certifies over 107,000 CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professionals in the United States. Since 1985, CFP Board has set the standard for competent and ethical financial planning in the United States. Today, more than one-third of retail financial professionals are CFP® professionals who commit to CFP Board, as part of their certification, to act as a fiduciary, and therefore, to act in the best interests of the client at all times when providing financial advice. CFP® professionals operate under various business and compensation models (including commission-based compensation and fee compensation) and provide professional services on behalf of investment advisers, broker-dealers, and insurance companies, among other business types.

Thank you for holding this critical hearing on modernizing retirement policy for today's workforce. After a lifetime of hard work, Americans want and deserve the peace of mind that financial security brings to them in their later years. For some workers, the current system of financing their retirement will allow them to retire and to live with dignity and financial independence. For far too many Americans, however, a dignified retirement and financial independence are an elusive goal. Only half of all private-sector employees in the United States have access to an employer-provided retirement plan. This is a fundamental issue that must be addressed. We applaud your leadership in advancing retirement innovations and hope to continue working together to ensure all workers have access to a retirement plan.

While access to a retirement plan is the starting point for financial wellness, it is also only the beginning of the process. With more than half of American households at risk of failing to maintain their standard of living in retirement, holistic financial advice and financial planning – estimated to help the average household save 7.5% of their annual income per year – is essential for retirement

planning. A recent CFP Board [study](#) of American Generation Xers found that their most significant financial regret was not saving more for retirement – with only 37% reporting they had achieved their financial goals. Indeed, 60% of Gen Xers we surveyed reported that their top financial recommendation to younger Americans was to start saving for retirement now, even in small amounts. Additionally, the study found that these financial regrets led Gen Xers to understand the value of developing a financial plan and partnering with a financial advisor.

As Congress considers modernizing retirement policy, it is essential to focus not only on growing retirement savings but also on the “spend-down” phase of retirement. The ongoing retirement surge has exposed the critical need for spend-down options and retirement income alternatives. Many people approaching retirement are uncertain about how to manage their retirement assets and unclear about the relationship between assets, withdrawals for income, longer life expectancies, and retirement goals. There also is evidence that, due to increased longevity and rising medical costs, many retirees are fearful of outliving their savings and, as a result, reluctant to spend retirement assets.

Clearly, there is a need for new arrangements, products, and services to help Americans in the spend-down phase. As the private sector develops them, Congress and regulatory bodies must ensure that appropriate regulatory and compliance guardrails are in place to ensure stability and quality, pricing comparable to institutional pricing levels, full and clear transparency of compensation and costs, a fiduciary standard of conduct, and protection against conflicts of interest.

We also urge Congress to work to expand consumers’ access to financial advice, including financial planning, through targeted tax incentives, such as an above-the-line tax deduction or tax credit. While retirees with substantial savings may engage professionals like financial planners, middle-class and lower-income retirees often do not, and would benefit from these services and protections. This is crucial for Americans approaching key life milestones, such as when they begin retirement savings and when they begin drawing down those assets after retirement. There is no one-size-fits-all strategy, and each person’s circumstance is unique. With proper financial planning, all individuals can gain insight into the retirement strategies that are best for them and align those choices with their personal priorities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues further, please contact me at 202-379-2240 or by email at ekoepel@cfpboard.org.

Sincerely,



Erin Koeppel
Managing Director, Government Relations & Public Policy Counsel
Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc.

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Center for Financial Planning

CC: The Honorable Tim Walberg, Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Ranking Member of the House Education and Workforce Committee