
US workers are willing to pay for better retirement benefits

By Editorial Staff *Thu, May 17, 2018*

But fewer than one in four would pay for tools and services that help them live healthier lifestyles or help improve their finances, a Willis Towers Watson survey shows.

Most US workers would accept a smaller paycheck for larger employer-provided retirement benefits, according to the 2017 Global Benefits Attitudes Survey by Willis Towers Watson.

Two-thirds of respondents (66%) would be willing to pay more each month for larger, more generous retirement benefits, while 61% would give up more pay for a guaranteed retirement benefit, the survey of nearly 5,000 US employees showed.

Far fewer would make a similar trade-off for health care benefits. Only 38% are willing to pay more each month for a more generous health care plan; 46% are willing to pay more to have lower, more predictable costs when using health care services.

Employees are even less open to paying for tools and services. Fewer than one in four would pay for tools and services that help them live healthier lifestyles (24%) or help improve their finances (19%).

“Employees continue to feel vulnerable about their long-term financial prospects and say they are willing to pay more for greater retirement security,” said Steve Nyce, senior economist, Willis Towers Watson. But on health care “they are basically saying ‘enough is enough.’ Far fewer are willing to pay more each month for more generous health benefits and more predictable costs.”

Employees would like more paid vacation time. Nearly six in 10 employees (58%) would take more time off in exchange for an equivalent change in pay, while the same number would take a more generous retirement plan for an equal change in pay. Just over half (55%) would accept a more generous health care plan in exchange for an equivalent change in pay.

Nearly half (48%) would welcome more financial protection benefits, reflecting a growing interest and need for benefits to help employees address their financial needs. In addition, access to decision support is valued by workers. Nearly nine in 10 employees with benefit choices and access to decision support say their benefit programs meet their needs, which is more than twice that of those without choice.

The 2017 Willis Towers Watson Global Benefits Attitudes Survey examines attitudes toward the health and retirement benefits of over 30,000 private sector employees in 22 countries. A total of 4,983 U.S. workers participated in the survey, which was conducted in July and August 2017.

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