September 20, 2022

Sent via e-mail

Dear Representative:

The undersigned members of the Federal-Postal Coalition, a group of more than 30 national organizations representing nearly 5 million federal and postal employees and annuitants, write to express our support for the bipartisan Social Security Fairness Act of 2021, H.R. 82, which would repeal the burdensome Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). These two penalties unfairly target the earned Social Security benefits of our nation's public servants, including a substantial portion of our country's federal retirees. We urge you to support a full House vote on H.R. 82 this month.

The WEP and GPO take away the hard-earned retirement income of public servants at all levels of government, including teachers, firefighters, police officers, federal workers, and more, whose work was not covered by Social Security. The GPO provides that two-thirds of the non-covered government pension offsets whatever Social Security benefits would be payable to the retired government worker as a spouse (wife, husband, widow, widower), often eliminating any spousal or survivor Social Security benefit. The WEP can result in a monthly Social Security benefit as much as $512 less than under the regular benefit formula (at normal retirement age), drastically reducing the amount of fixed income for a retiree to live on. These penalties result in thousands of dollars in lost benefits every year simply because these workers chose to serve their local community and nation. It is time to end these penalties.

Repeal of these provisions is long overdue. Social Security is a critical source of income for our nation's retirees, yet we have allowed needless discrimination against retired public servants for far too long. These individuals paid Social Security taxes in connection with covered work (e.g., in the private sector), earning their Social Security benefits. Yet because they chose careers in public service and earned a pension through that service, their earned Social Security benefits are significantly reduced - or even eliminated. These penalties discourage public service and hamper the retirement security of those with long careers benefiting this nation.

The Federal-Postal Coalition is encouraged to see that a bipartisan majority of Representatives support ending these unjust penalties and thank all who have cosponsored the bill. Alongside a broad coalition of workers across the country, these representatives understand that public workers deserve what they have earned. Now it is time for the House to take action to address these longstanding inequities.

For these reasons, we urge you to support H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, and push to bring this bill to the floor for a vote this month. Please contact the Federal-Postal Coalition Chair, John Hatton, at jhatton@narfe.org, and/or Vice-Chair, Katie Maddocks, at kmaddocks@npmhu.org.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)
American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
FAA Managers Association (FAAMA)
Federal Managers Association (FMA)
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), AFL-CIO
National Association of Assistant US Attorneys (NAAUSA)
National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)
National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)
National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS)
National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA)
National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)
National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO)
Organization of Professional Employees of the US Department of Agriculture
Patent Office Professional Association (POPA)
Professional Managers Association (PMA)
Senior Executives Association (SEA)