



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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April 14, 2023

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 90,000 members of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), we are writing to urge you to support the passage of H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023. We ask you to join the bipartisan cosponsors of the legislation if you have not already done so and talk to your colleagues on the House Ways and Means Committee and in House leadership to request swift passage of this legislation.

This Social Security Fairness Act, which is jointly sponsored by Representatives Garret Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). As it stands now, the WEP and the GPO reduce the earned Social Security benefits of more than 2 million government retirees, representing roughly 4 percent of Social Security beneficiaries.

IFPTE is proud to represent tens of thousands of government workers, including federal workers at NASA, the Department of Defense, and the legislative branch, as well as state and local workers from New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Illinois, and California, some whose jobs are and were not covered by Social Security. However, it is not uncommon that many of these workers and their spouses had other jobs throughout their lifetime in the private sector and elsewhere that were covered by Social Security. Unfortunately, these workers and their dependents have their earned Social Security benefits reduced, or even eliminated in some cases, as a result of the GPO and WEP.

Here is how GPO and WEP impact government workers:

- The GPO calls for a reduction in the earned SSA benefits of dependents/survivors by two-thirds compared to your government pension. In other words, a survivor/dependent SSA benefit is reduced by \$2 for every \$3 received from a government pension. This obviously significantly reduces and even eliminates in some cases the SSA survivor benefit for retirees who receive non-covered government pensions.
- The WEP reduces earned Social Security benefits by as much as half for retirees who also receive non-covered government pensions. For example, a retiree who receives a non-covered government pension who also worked 21 years or less in the private sector and paid Social Security taxes on those private sector earnings will have their earned Social Security benefits reduced by as much as \$512 a month. While the Social Security benefit reduction scales down from there up to 30 years working in a covered job, it nonetheless represents a substantial reduction earned Social Security benefits for those who worked in covered positions for fewer than 30 years.

We understand that SSA's Office of the Chief Actuary (OCACT) has projected that the legislation would reduce Social Security Trust Funds by \$146 billion. We believe it is important to fund this cost through progressive measures so that it does not reduce the balance of the combined Social Security Trust Funds. Some possible funding options to pay for this legislation and also shore up the Trust Funds include applying the payroll tax to earnings and self-employment income above \$400,000 or extending the 12.4% Social Security tax to investment income and business income not covered by payroll taxes.

Allowing the WEP and GPO to continue is doing a disservice to current and future retirees who have given decades of their professional lives to serving the public. It also makes it difficult for governments to recruit and retain qualified and dedicated employees who want to work in public service. IFPTE is pleased that lawmakers from across the political spectrum realize this, as is evidenced by the support that the Social Security Fairness Act enjoys in the House, which currently exceeds 220 Representatives.

Now is the time to correct this inequity. We urge you to request your Ways and Means Committee colleagues support this legislation and House leadership schedule a vote on H.R. 82 once the legislation is out of committee. Should you have any questions, please contact IFPTE Legislative Director Faraz Khan at 202-239-4892.

Sincerely,



Matthew S. Biggs
IFPTE President



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Secretary-Treasurer