

May 11, 2020

United States Congress  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I urge you to support providing economic stimulus through the repeal or reform of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). Both of these provisions unfairly reduce the Social Security benefits of millions of former public servants. Repealing or reforming WEP and GPO would not only provide long overdue relief to these retirees, but as part of a larger stimulus package, they could also help jump-start the economy in the wake of the recession caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Millions of dedicated public servants continue to serve their country and communities despite facing a heightened risk of infection from this dangerous new virus. Tackling WEP and GPO would send an important message that this nation will honor those who serve their fellow citizens, as well as right a long-standing wrong unduly punishing federal employees.

As such, I urge you to support including the language of any of the following bipartisan bills in a future economic stimulus package: the Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 141/S. 521; the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act, H.R. 4540; or the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act, H.R. 3934/S. 3401. The Social Security Fairness Act would fully repeal the WEP and GPO. Both the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act and the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act would offer some relief from WEP through increased monthly Social Security benefits for current retirees and the application of a new formula for future retirees. For more details on these bills and how they differ, see [NARFE's issue brief on the WEP and GPO](#).

The WEP reduces the Social Security benefits of local, state and federal retirees who worked in Social Security-covered employment (e.g., private-sector jobs) and who also receive a government pension from their non-Social Security covered state, local or federal government employment. For federal retirees, WEP applies to those who began their federal employment prior to 1983 and are covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), as of December 2019, the WEP affects 1,912,706 beneficiaries, including 1,797,415 retired workers, 12,943 workers with disabilities, and 102,348 spouses and children. In 2020, the WEP can result in a monthly benefit that is \$480 lower than under the regular benefit formula. This unfair reduction causes a disproportionate decrease in benefits for workers with lower monthly benefit amounts than those with higher benefit amounts.

The GPO reduces a Social Security spousal or widow(er)'s benefit by two-thirds of a local, state or federal retiree's government pension based on non-Social Security covered employment. Like WEP, the GPO applies to federal retirees covered by CSRS. According to CRS, the GPO affects 707,879 beneficiaries. Of those affected by the GPO, 46 percent are widows or widowers, and 83 percent are women. In addition to CSRS annuitants, the GPO affects thousands of state and municipal retirees, as well as teachers and police officers whose work is not covered by Social Security.

Every day, public servants in federal, state and local government step up to serve their country and communities without a second thought. In times of crisis, that willingness to serve is even more pronounced and commendable. This time is no different. This may be a novel crisis, but it is not the first our country has faced, nor will it be the last. Through each, and in between them, millions of Americans answer the call to service with a determination to meet the challenges we face together.

I simply ask that you remember that service and honor it appropriately. A good place to start is by righting the wrongs of the past and finally repealing or reforming the long-troubling inequities caused by the WEP and GPO.

Thank you for the consideration of our views. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact NARFE's Staff Vice President for Policy and Programs Jessica Klement at [jklement@narfe.org](mailto:jklement@narfe.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Thomas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ken Thomas  
National President