

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 21, 2016

The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Chairman  
House Committee on Ways & Means  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Ways & Means  
1106 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Johnson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Social Security  
House Committee on Ways & Means  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Social Security  
House Committee on Ways & Means  
1106 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Brady and Johnson and Ranking Members Levin and Becerra,

Thank you for scheduling a hearing on Social Security provisions that affect certain public employees. As you know, we have introduced H.R. 973, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2015. This legislation would eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), two titles of the Social Security Act that unfairly reduce or in some cases eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of Americans who have devoted much of their careers to public service.

The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) reduces the earned Social Security benefits of individuals who also receive a public pension from a job not covered by Social Security. For example, educators who do not earn Social Security while employed by public schools but who work part-time or during the summer in jobs covered by Social Security have reduced benefits even though they pay into the system just like everyone else. The WEP also affects people who move from a job in which they earn Social Security to a job, such as teaching, in which they do not. This can ultimately reduce benefits by as much as 40 percent.

Similarly, the Government Pension Offset (GPO) reduces by two-thirds the benefit received by surviving spouses who also collect a government pension. Nine out of ten public employees affected by the GPO lose their entire spousal benefit, even though their spouse paid Social Security taxes for many years.

Reductions to Social Security benefits hurt state and local governments' ability to recruit and retain public employees. The loss of earned Social Security benefits and survivor benefits means mid-career job changes from private to public employment can result in the employees paying a lifetime cost in reduced retirement benefits.

Our legislation would fully repeal these inequitable provisions, and ensure that dedicated firefighters, police officers, teachers, and other public servants are not denied the benefits they worked hard to earn. H.R. 973 enjoys broad support from various groups, including but not limited to, the National Education Association, the National Fraternal Order of Police, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the Senior Citizens League and the National Association of Letter Carriers. As of March 21<sup>st</sup>, H.R. 973 also has 137 bipartisan cosponsors.

Again, we thank you for scheduling this important hearing and appreciate your attention to our legislation.

Sincerely,



Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress

April 4, 2016

Chairman Sam Johnson  
Social Security Subcommittee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Johnson:

We are writing to you on behalf of the thousands of retired employees across the state of Louisiana who are currently being penalized under the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset. Because of unfairly determined Social Security benefits, many of these employees are faced with unnecessary financial hardship. These are public servants who have contributed to the Social Security system and are entitled to a calculation that reflects their years of service.

We appreciate the hearing on March 22, 2015 for H.R. 711, The Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act, by Chairman Brady. Under this bill, the current and inadequate Windfall Elimination Provision would be repealed and a new formula would ensure that Social Security calculations reflect the contributions made by these employees. Also, estimates indicate that the costs associated with this bill over a 10 year period would have a cost-neutral effect on the budget.

Again, we appreciate your consideration of the impact that the current calculation has on thousands of retirees across Louisiana. They cannot afford to continue being penalized for their time of service to state and local government through decreased Social Security benefits. For this reason, we urge you to consider H.R. 711 and address the Government Pension Offset in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Garret Graves  
Member of Congress