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July 13, 2016

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1106 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Levin:

AARP is pleased to support H.R. 711, the Equal Treatment for Public Servants Act and H.R.5320, the Social Security Must Avert Identity Loss (MAIL) Act of 2016. AARP, with its nearly 38 million members in all 50 States and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

The Equal Treatment for Public Servants Act establishes a better rule to make it easier for the Social Security Administration and individuals who are currently subject to the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) to determine and receive their earned Social Security benefits. In the FY 2017 Budget Request, President Obama also proposed a comparable process to more fairly calculate Social Security benefits for WEP individuals. In 1947, AARP's founder, Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, established the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA), to serve the needs of retired educators like her. Today, the NRTA is part of AARP's history and our organization. Your legislation is an opportunity to more fairly treat the public servants affected by WEP, including the many teachers who belong to the NRTA, as well as our many other members who have expressed concerns about the current WEP formula.

Over the years, millions of retired state and local workers have received a Social Security benefit that is excessively reduced under the current WEP formula because of the pension they have earned. As we previously noted in our testimony before the Ways

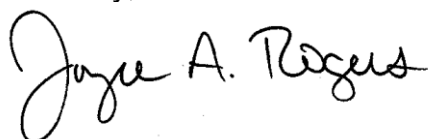
and Means Social Security Subcommittee hearing on H.R. 711, the bill will allow for benefits that accurately reflect the actual lifetime earnings of dual career workers, while recognizing that not all of those earnings were subject to Social Security taxes. Under the proposed formula going forward, individuals who have untaxed earnings, regardless of receipt of a pension, will have their Social Security benefits adjusted to reflect their actual contributions to the program. We are mindful that under the proposed bill, there will be individuals who are currently shielded from the WEP who, when they retire in the future, will be subject to the new formula. It is important to also recognize that under the proposed bill, all workers will receive a Social Security benefit that accurately reflects their actual lifetime earnings as well as all of their Social Security contributions, and we believe that approach is fair to all program participants.

We appreciate that the bill has been amended to ensure that all current retirees will be held harmless from overpayments that can now be identified through data matching of uncovered earnings by the Social Security Administration. This modification to the bill is a welcome improvement that will shield recipients who may have faced hardship in establishing that they should not be subject to the current WEP formula, or who simply would be unable to reimburse the Social Security Administration for an unexpected overpayment.

Finally, we want to express our support for H.R. 5320. The legislation would ensure that Social Security numbers (SSNs) are protected by making clear the Social Security Administration may not include a full Social Security account number on any document sent by mail unless the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration determines that such inclusion is necessary. Because of the critical nature of Social Security numbers, AARP has a longstanding public policy position that companies, government agencies, and individuals should not be allowed to post or publicly display Social Security numbers.

Because of Social Security, millions of Americans and their families are able to live their lives with dignity and independence. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that all aspects of the Social Security program remain strong for future generations of American workers and their families. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me, or have your staff contact Cristina Martin Firvida on our Government Affairs staff at 202-434-6194.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joyce A. Rogers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joyce A. Rogers
Senior Vice President
Government Affairs