



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
12 JANUARY 2023

CONTACT: TIM RICHARDSON
(202) 547-8189

“Social Security Fairness Act” Introduced in the House ***H.R. 82: Repeal of WEP and GPO***

Patrick Yoes, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, applauded the re-introduction of H.R. 82, the “Social Security Fairness Act,” in the U.S. House of Representatives and thanked the bill’s lead sponsors, Representatives Garret N., Graves (R-LA) and Abigail A. Spanberger (D-VA), for their swift action on this important bill.

“We came so very close to getting this bill to a vote on the House floor just a few months ago, Yoes said. “I am very glad that Representatives Graves and Spanberger acted quickly to reserve the same bill number as last Congress and introduced it early so we can maintain the momentum we have had over the past few months.”

The legislation, which is the top legislative priority for the FOP, would repeal both the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) in current Social Security law. At the time of introduction, the bill had seven original cosponsors, but at the end of the previous Congress the bill had the support of 305 Representatives—more than a majority in the House—and was slated to be considered on the House floor under a special rule before the Committee on Ways and Means passed it.

“With a lot of hard work and the leadership of Representatives Graves and Spanberger, we can get a majority of the House to cosponsor it and get this bill to the House floor for a vote,” Yoes said.

The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) affects workers who spent some time in jobs not covered by Social Security and also worked other jobs where they paid Social Security taxes long enough to qualify for retirement benefits. The provision has a disproportionate effect on law enforcement officers who retire earlier than most other public employees and are more likely to begin a second career after they leave law enforcement. Officers in this position are penalized and may have their Social Security benefit reduced by up to sixty percent (60%).

“Law enforcement officers and other public employees who file for the Social Security benefit they paid for, they find themselves facing a significant reduction of that benefit

because of the WEP,” Yoes explained. “Many retired law enforcement officers, especially those whose work history includes a mix of jobs inside and outside the Social Security system, are hit particularly hard. This is a loss of benefits to which they are unequivocally entitled, not an adjustment for a ‘windfall.’”

Like the WEP, the Government Pension Offset (GPO) was adopted to shore up the finances of the Social Security trust fund. It offsets the Social Security benefit to which a surviving spouse is entitled by two-thirds of the monthly amount of any government pension that they might receive.

“It is estimated that, 90% of the time, this so-called ‘offset’ completely eliminates the spousal benefit even though the covered spouse paid Social Security taxes for many years, thereby earning the right to these benefits,” Yoes said.

“The WEP and GPO provisions do not eliminate a windfall for workers; instead, they have proved to be a windfall for the Federal government at the expense of public employees. That’s not right and it’s not fair,” said Yoes. “It is incumbent on Congress to repeal these inequitable provisions and pass the ‘Social Security Fairness Act,’ which will also help to stimulate the economy by putting additional cash in the pocket of retired public employees as they and their families struggle in these trying times.”

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Founded in 1915, the Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, with more than 364,000 members. With national offices in Nashville, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., the FOP is committed to improving the working conditions of law enforcement officers and the safety of those served through education, legislation, information, community involvement, and employee representation. Please visit <https://www.fop.net> for more information.