



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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PATRICK YOES
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JIM PASCO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

19 March 2020

The Honorable Nancy P. Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin O. McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin P. Brady
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker, Chairman Neal and Representatives McCarthy and Brady,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to respectfully request that the House consider including the “Social Security Fairness Act” into the so-called “Phase 3,” a bill being developed in the Senate in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The repeal of the “Windfall Elimination Provision” (WEP) and the “Government Pension Offset” (GPO) in current Social Security law would simultaneously end a gross unfairness against retired public employees and help to stimulate the economy by eliminating a reduction in the Social Security benefits for these Americans.

This would have an immediate positive impact on public employees—putting additional cash in their pocket as they and their families struggle in these trying times. In addition, the Americans who would benefit from this repeal are retirees—older citizens—who are more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus.

When the WEP was enacted in 1983, its stated purpose was to remove a “windfall” for persons who spent some time in jobs not covered by Social Security and who also worked other jobs where they paid Social Security taxes long enough to qualify for retirement benefits. This provision has created a very real inequity for many public employees, particularly law enforcement officers, who retire earlier than other government employees and often begin second careers which require them to pay into the Social Security system. Law enforcement officers who had second careers face as much as a 60% cut to the Social Security benefits. This is a reduction of a benefit to which they are entitled because they paid into the system—not an adjustment for a “windfall.” In the current climate of the pandemic, these reductions have a detrimental impact on our vulnerable retirees and on the economy.

--BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION--




Similarly, the GPO 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. For example, the widow of a retired law enforcement officer who collected a government pension of \$1,200 would be *ineligible* to collect the Social security survivor's benefit of \$600. Two-thirds of \$1,200 is \$800, which is greater than the spouse's benefit of \$600 and thus making her unable to collect it. If the spouse's benefit was \$900, she would collect only \$100, because \$800 would be "offset" by the government pension. Again, this offset scheme currently in place penalizes those employees least able to afford it and to an older population that is at greater risk to the pandemic. We believe this "offset" is a drag on the economy and its repeal would provide the economic stimulus our nation desperately needs right now.

The "Social Security Fairness Act" has wide bipartisan support in both the Senate and in the House, where more than 240 Representatives are cosponsors. We believe that the repeal of these two provisions will help our vulnerable retirees make it through this pandemic and will help stabilize our nation's economy.

On behalf of the more than 350,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I urge that you strongly consider making the repeal of the WEP and GPO a part of the "Phase 3" legislation if the Senate has not already done so. Thank you in advance for your consideration of our views on this matter. If I can be of any assistance whatsoever, please do not hesitate to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PATRICK YOES", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Patrick Yoes
National President

cc: The Honorable Rodney L. Davis, Member, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Garret N. Graves, Member, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable C. Michael Thompson, Member, U.S. House of Representatives