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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
6 APRIL 2020**

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### **FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE CALLS ON CONGRESS TO PASS SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT TO BOOST ECONOMY AND HELP OLDER, VULNERABLE RETIREES**

Patrick Yoes, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police, called on Congress today to take up and pass H.R. 141/S. 521, the “Social Security Fairness Act,” which would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) provisions in current law.

“The repeal of the WEP and GPO 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,” Yoes said. “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.”

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,” Yoes said. “The Americans who would benefit from this repeal are retirees—older citizens—who are more vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus.”

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.



“This offset scheme penalizes those employees least able to afford it and to an older population that is at greater risk during this crisis,” Yoes said. “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,” Yoes said. “The FOP believes 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.”

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, with more than 350,000 members.