



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

328 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.E.
WASHINGTON, DC 20002

PATRICK YOES
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JIM PASCO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

6 April 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ronald L. Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators McConnell, Schumer, Grassley, and Wyden,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to respectfully request that the Senate consider including the “Social Security Fairness Act” into the so-called “Phase 4” bill 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--

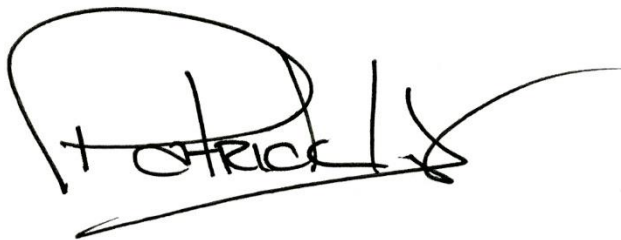


Similarly, the GPO offsets the Social Security benefit to which a surviving spouse is entitled by two-thirds of the monthly amount of any government pension that they might receive. For example, the widow of a retired law enforcement officer who collected a government pension of \$1,200 would be *ineligible* 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 needs.

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 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 4" legislation. 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, D.C. 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 Sherrod C. Brown, Member, United States Senate
The Honorable Susan M. Collins, Member, United States Senate