

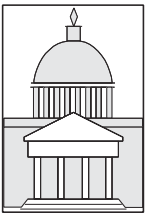
TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

INSIDE

A comprehensive grassroots effort to repeal these devastating provisions

**HOW YOU
CAN WORK TO**

REPEAL GPO & WEP TODAY



What is GPO and WEP?

The Government Pension Offset (GPO) eliminates or reduces the spousal Social Security benefit by two-thirds the value of a teacher's retirement benefit. Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) reduces (but does not eliminate) a portion of an Individual's Social Security earned through other work history outside of his/her public employment.

Who is affected?

GPO and WEP affect public employees in states that do not participate in the Social Security system. The GPO and WEP affect public employees in virtually every state; however, those states with the greatest Impact are Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Texas.

The Call for Repeal

The National Coalition for GPO/WEP Repeal is calling for an immediate and complete repeal of both the GPO and WEP. These Social Security provisions discriminate against individuals who have chosen to serve their communities or country in public jobs by reducing retired public employees' Social Security or survivor benefits. A non-public employee with a private pension will keep his/her entire pension and receive his/her full Social Security or survivor benefit.

What is being proposed and what you can do

Several bills have been proposed to address this issue; however, there are two that deserve our support. U.S. Representatives Buck McKeon (R-CA) introduced HR 82 that calls for complete repeal of both the GPO and WEP. U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) introduced S 206 as a companion bill in the Senate. Contact your U.S. Senators and Representative and ask them to co-sponsor these initiatives to repeal the GPO and WEP.

What you need to know

Government Pension Offset

The Government Pension Offset (GPO) eliminates or reduces the spousal Social Security benefit by two-thirds the value of a teacher's retirement benefit. This reduction occurs whether the Social Security receiving spouse is alive, deceased, or divorced. Remember, the GPO only impacts those individuals who were not eligible to retire prior to December 31, 1982 (at least age 55 and twenty years of credible service). The following examples help clarify how the GPO may affect an Individual in these different circumstances.

Michael collects a Social Security benefit of \$800 per month. His wife, Jan, who is a retired public schoolteacher, worked for a school district that did not pay Social Security on its employees. Jan receives a monthly teacher annuity of \$1,200. For the purpose of this example, both Michael and Jan are age 65 or older.

Effect of GPO with Living Spouse

Jan's potential Social Security:	Benefit: \$800 X 1/2 = \$400
Amount Calculated for GPO reduction:	\$1,200 X 2/3 = \$800
Total monthly Social Security benefit:	\$400 - \$800 = No benefit

Effect of GPO upon Death or Divorce

Jan's potential Social Security Benefit:	\$800
Amount Calculated for GPO reduction:	\$1,200 X 2/3 = \$800
Total Social Security Benefit:	\$800 - \$800 = No benefit

These examples illustrate a complete offset, whereas in other situations there may not be a complete offset. It is important to remember that in cases where a complete offset has not occurred, any increase in the teacher's benefit will result in a recalculation of the Social Security benefit. In other words, as the teacher's annuity goes up, the Social Security benefit goes down.

Windfall Elimination Provision

The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) uses a modified formula that may reduce your earned Social Security benefit. The modified formula applies to you when you attain age 62 or if you become disabled after 1985 and first become eligible after 1985 for a monthly pension based in whole or in part on work where you did not pay Social Security taxes.

The modified formula is used to figure your Social Security benefit beginning with the first month you get both a Social Security benefit and a teacher's retirement benefit. However, you can be exempt from WEP if you retired or were eligible to retire prior to December 1985 or have 30 years of "substantial" Social Security earnings.

The WEP reduction formula does not totally eliminate potential Social Security earnings. In addition, the WEP reduction is not based on how much you earned from other work not covered by Social Security (e.g., your teacher's retirement benefit). The formula used for calculating the first portion of the Social Security benefit will be reduced if you have less than 30 years of "substantial" earnings in Social Security. Table A (in the sidebar) illustrates the amount of earnings Social Security considers "substantial" for various years. Table B illustrates the reduced percentage used to calculate the first portion of your Social Security benefit based on less than 30 years of "substantial" earnings in Social Security.

Contact a Social Security representative to verify your years of "substantial" earnings and request a calculation of your Social Security benefit. (See web site www.ssa.gov.)

Table A

Year	Substantial Earnings
1937-50	\$ 900
1951-54	900
1955-58	1.050
1959-65	1,200
1966-67	1,650
1968-71	1,950
1972	2,250
1973	2,700
1974	3,300
1975	3,525
1976	3,825
1977	4,125
1978	4,425
1979	4,725
1980	5,100
1981	5,550
1982	6,075
1983	6,675
1984	7,050
1985	7,425
1986	7,875
1987	8,175
1988	8,400
1989	8,925
1990	9,525
1991	9,900
1992	10,350
1993	10,725
1994	11,250
1995	11,325
1996	11,625
1997	12,150
1998	12,675
1999	13,425
2000	14,175
2001	14,925
2002	15,750
2003	16,125
2004	16,275
2005	16,725

Table B*

Years of Substantial Earnings	Percentage
30 or more	90 percent
29	85 percent
28	80 percent
27	75 percent
26	70 percent
25	65 percent
24	60 percent
23	55 percent
22	50 percent
21	45 percent
20 or less	40 percent

*Percentage Used for Calculating First Portion of Social Security Benefit.

Sample Letter

Dear U.S. Senator/U.S. Representative:

I am a retired public educator from (insert where you taught) writing you about two unjust Social Security provisions that affect hundreds of thousands of retired educators and other public employees across the country. These provisions are known as the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). I urge Congress to enact legislation repealing these two Social Security provisions.

The Government Pension Offset (GPO) eliminates or reduces the spousal Social Security benefit by two-thirds the value of a teacher's retirement benefit. The WEP reduces (but does not eliminate) a portion of an individual's Social Security earned from other work outside of his/her public employment.

I am affected by the (insert your personal story here about how the GPO, the WEP or both have affected you).

U.S. Representative Buck McKeon (R-CA) introduced HR 82 that calls for complete repeal of both the GPO and WEP. U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) introduced S 206 as a companion bill in the Senate. I am asking that you support this legislation to repeal the GPO and WEP.

The repeal of the GPO and the WEP would greatly benefit thousands of public servants now being penalized for their lives' work. Lawmakers have promised to help seniors with various programs or reforms. These are hard times for seniors living on fixed incomes. The costs of health insurance, prescription drugs and general cost of living expenses continue to increase. Thank you for taking the time to consider this issue. I look forward to hearing from you on how you will help in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Letter Writing Tips

1. Remember proper format including date and appropriate titles:
Today's date
The Honorable (name -US Senator)
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable (name -US Rep)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator or Representative
(Insert Last Name)
2. The first paragraph should be a short introduction of who you are and that you are requesting your Senator or Congressman to sign on as a co-sponsor of either S 206 or HR 82.
3. The second paragraph should be a brief explanation of the issue on which you are writing.
4. The third paragraph (or section, if needed) is an explanation of how the GPO, WEP or both are impacting you. Include as much information as you feel comfortable sharing, such as how long you taught, how many years your spouse may have worked to earn his/her Social Security, how much money you are losing on a monthly/yearly basis, how many years you worked in education and in other employment to earn the Social Security, etc.
5. The concluding paragraph should thank the Congressman for his/her time and consideration on this issue. Ask to be sent a written response to your letter and to be kept on a mailing list regarding this issue. Remember to be factual and direct.

How you can work to REPEAL GPO & WEP TODAY!

Texas Retired Teachers Association
313 E.12th St., Ste. 200
Austin, TX 78701-1957



512.476.1622
800.880.1650 Fax 512.476.1003
www.trta.org • trta@trta.org

Information Hotline: 877.880.1651

**HOW YOU
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INSIDE

*A comprehensive grassroots effort
to repeal these devastating provisions*

**REPEAL
GPO & WEP
TODAY**



PLEASE WRITE LETTERS TO THE FOLLOWING:

President George W. Bush
The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington D.C. 20500

Speaker of the House
Rep. Nancy Pelosi

235 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
sf.nancy@mail.house.gov

House Majority Leader
Rep. Steny H. Hoyer

1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
www.hoyer.house.gov

Vice President Dick Cheney
The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington D.C. 20500

House Minority Leader
Rep. John A. Boehner

1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
www.john.boehner.house.gov

Rep. Charles Rangel
Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee
2354 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
www.house.gov/writerep

Rep. Michael McNulty
Chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security
2210 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515
mike.mculty@mail.house.gov

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
Senator John Cornyn

Address the envelope to U.S. Senators as:
The Honorable (insert name of U.S. Senator)
United States Senate, Washington DC 20510

HOW TO LOCATE YOUR U.S. CONGRESSMEN

- 1 Go to www.capitol.state.tx.us
- 2 Click on Redistrict on left sidebar
- 3 Click on Who Represents Me?
- 4 Enter your street address, city, zip code

Address the envelope to U.S Representative as:
The Honorable (insert name of U.S. Representative)
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C. 20515

