

Testimony
Before the United States House of Representatives
Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Social Security
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Social Security's Disservice to Public Servants: How the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset Mistreat Government Workers

**Statement of
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Chairman Ferguson, Ranking Member Larson, and Members of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security:

My name is Craig Carter and I am submitting this testimony today on behalf of the Federal Managers Association (FMA), representing the interests of more than 200,000 managers, supervisors, and executives in the federal government. Thank you for this opportunity to present our views on the Government Pension Offset (GPO), the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), and the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82), which would repeal both of these injurious, discriminatory provisions. As federal managers, we are committed to carrying out the mission of our agencies in the most efficient and cost-effective manner while providing necessary services to millions of Americans. Regrettably, the GPO and WEP have brought unnecessary harm to millions of retired feds for decades and FMA supports the full repeal that H.R. 82 delivers.

I am the National President of the Federal Managers Association. In my professional life, I work at Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY), in Portsmouth Virginia, as an Assistant Project Superintendent in the Nuclear Special Attention Section working on Naval Warships. Please note that my testimony represents the views of FMA and I do not speak on behalf of the Department of the Navy.

Established in 1913, the Federal Managers Association is the largest and oldest association of managers and supervisors in the federal government. FMA was originally organized to represent the interests of civil service managers and supervisors in the Department of Defense (DOD) and has since branched out to include more than 40 different federal departments and agencies. We are a nonprofit, professional, membership-based organization dedicated to advocating excellence in public service. Our purpose is to ensure an efficient and effective federal government, so this hearing, examining ways to empower managers and discussing ideas for managers to better perform their jobs, is welcome and timely. As front-line managers, we appreciate the opportunity to present this testimony.

GOVERNMENT PENSION OFFSET (GPO)

The Social Security Government Pension Offset law prevents government retirees who receive a government pension, but did not pay into Social Security, from collecting both a government annuity based on their own work, and Social Security benefits based on their spouse's work record. This is unfair to many spouses, especially widows, who often lose the Social Security protection their spouse provided for them. Under current law, a Social Security widow's benefit is reduced by \$2 for every \$3 earned if the widow is eligible for a pension based on a public sector job that was not covered by Social Security. According to the Congressional Research Service¹, as of December 2022, more than 730,000 Social Security beneficiaries had their benefits reduced by the GPO, with 52 percent spouses and 48 percent widow(er)s. No offset affects spouses receiving pensions from private sector employers.

WINDFALL ELIMINATION PROVISION (WEP)

The Windfall Elimination Provision is another inequity that disadvantages many federal retirees receiving Social Security benefits and a federal pension which did not require payment into Social

¹ <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10203>

Security. It reduces the Social Security benefits federal retirees receive based on the number of years they served in a federal position that did not require their payment of Social Security taxes. According to the Congressional Research Service², as of December 2022, the WEP impacts approximately two million people, roughly 3 percent of all Social Security beneficiaries.

SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRNESS ACT (H.R. 82)

Introduced on January 9, 2023, the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82) eliminates both the government pension offset and the windfall elimination provision. Sponsored by Representatives Garret Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), H.R. 82 has extraordinary bipartisan support with 300 cosponsors, nearly 70 percent of the entire chamber, at the time of this hearing. It is worth noting the make-up of that support is 201 Democrats and 99 Republicans, proving clear support from both sides of the aisle. The Senate companion bill, S. 597, offered by Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) enjoys similar strong bipartisan support with 49 cosponsors.

As stated up front, FMA steadfastly opposes both the GPO and WEP and urges a full repeal of both current laws. FMA therefore strongly endorsed H.R. 82 upon its introduction and urges its passage into law. This reform is overdue as demonstrated by the overwhelming support by so many in Congress. We applaud Chairman Ferguson for holding this hearing on the legislation and we call for a markup by the full Ways and Means Committee as a next step.

Thank you for the opportunity to share FMA's views with the Subcommittee. We are eager to answer any questions you may have.

² <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10203>