



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

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Senators Brown and Collins Introduce “Social Security Fairness Act” to Repeal WEP and GPO

Washington, DC – Patrick Yoes, National President of the Fraternal Order of Police welcomed news that the “Social Security Fairness Act” was re-introduced in the United States Senate by Senators Sherrod D. Brown (D-OH), Susan M. Collins (R-ME), and 23 others as S. 597.

“I am very grateful to Senators Brown and Collins for leading this effort in the Senate and also to the 23 other Senators who are original cosponsors of this critically important bill, said Yoes. “We came so very close to getting this bill to a vote on the House floor just a few months ago and I think the introduction of the bill with such a strong showing will help us maintain our momentum.”

The legislation, which is the top legislative priority for the FOP, would repeal both the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) in current Social Security law. The WEP affects workers who spent some time in jobs not covered by Social Security and also worked other jobs where they paid Social Security taxes long enough to qualify for retirement benefits. The provision disproportionately affects law enforcement officers who retire earlier than most other public employees and are more likely to begin a second career after they leave law enforcement. Officers in this position are penalized and may have their Social Security benefits reduced by up to sixty percent (60%).

“Law enforcement officers and other public employees who file for the Social Security benefit they paid for often find themselves facing a significant reduction of that benefit because of the WEP,” Yoes explained. “Many retired law enforcement officers, especially those whose work history includes a mix of jobs inside and outside the Social Security system, are hit particularly hard. This is a loss of benefits to which they are unequivocally entitled, not an adjustment for a ‘windfall.’”

Like the WEP, the Government Pension Offset (GPO) was adopted to shore up the finances of the Social Security trust fund. It 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.

“It is estimated that, 90% of the time, this so-called ‘offset’ completely eliminates the spousal benefit even though the covered spouse paid Social Security taxes for many years, thereby earning the right to these benefits,” Yoes said.

“The WEP and GPO provisions do not eliminate a windfall for workers; instead, they have proved to be a windfall for the Federal government at the expense of public employees. That’s not right and it’s not fair,” said Yoes. “It is incumbent on Congress to repeal these inequitable provisions and pass the ‘Social Security Fairness Act,’ which will also help to stimulate the economy by putting additional cash in the pocket of retired public employees as they and their families struggle in these trying times.”

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Founded in 1915, the Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, with more than 364,000 members. With national offices in Nashville, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C., the FOP is committed to improving the working conditions of law enforcement officers and the safety of those served through education, legislation, information, community involvement, and employee representation. Please visit <https://www.fop.net> for more information.