The Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) penalize people who have dedicated their lives to public service by taking away benefits they have _earned_.

Nine out of 10 public employees affected by the GPO lose their entire spousal benefit, even though their spouse paid Social Security taxes for many years.

The WEP causes hard-working people to lose a significant portion of the benefits they earned themselves.

People who are denied Social Security by the GPO and WEP have less money to spend in their communities, and contribute less to their local economies.

Nationally, some 300,000 individuals lose an average of $3,600 a year due to the GPO -- an amount that can make the difference between self-sufficiency and poverty.

The number of people impacted continues to grow as more people reach retirement age, which means the problem -- and the danger to local ecomomies -- is growing.

This is an important public education issue. The GPO and WEP hurt student learning by discouraging talented people from entering or staying in the education profession.

Individuals who worked in other careers are less likely to want to become educators if doing so will mean a loss of earned Social Security benefits. The GPO and WEP are also causing current educators to leave the profession, and students to choose courses of study other than education.

Non-Social Security states are finding it increasingly difficult to attract quality educators as more professionals learn about the GPO and WEP.

The GPO and WEP will particularly hinder efforts to recruit new math and science teachers from the private sector.

Tell Congress we should RESPECT, not penalize, public educators!

Congress should pass the **Social Security Fairness Act**, which would completely repeal the GPO and WEP.

This legislation has overwhelming bipartisan support but has been languishing in committee for years. We cannot afford to wait any longer. The time to act is now!

To write your member of Congress and to find out more, go to www.NEA.org/socialsecurity

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