



December 3, 2024

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell,

On behalf of the members of the Kentucky Education Association (KEA), the Kentucky Professional Fire Fighters (KPFF), and the Kentucky State Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), we are writing to urge your support for the Social Security Fairness Act's (S. 597) passage in the current Congress. This bipartisan legislation seeks to fully repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), which have unjustly reduced or eliminated Social Security benefits earned by millions of hardworking teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other vital public service workers.

The GPO and WEP have unfairly penalized more than 2.8 million retirees across the nation, including tens of thousands of educators, firefighters, and law enforcement officers here in Kentucky. The WEP reduces retirement benefits for individuals who have worked in jobs that require contributions to both Social Security and non-Social Security-covered pension systems. This means that individuals—like educators and first responders—who have taken on part-time or summer jobs to support their families often face significant benefit reductions.

The GPO compounds this inequity by slashing spousal and survivor benefits for retirees with government pensions. For example, a retiree receiving a \$1,500 pension could see their Social Security benefits reduced by \$1,000—or lose them entirely. Approximately 700,000 retirees are affected, and over 70 percent of them lose all spousal or survivor benefits, creating unnecessary financial hardships for those who have dedicated their lives to public service. Kentucky's public servants deserve better.

These provisions not only harm current retirees but also discourage future professionals from pursuing careers in education, emergency management, and public protection. At a time when Kentucky and the nation are grappling with critical shortages in these fields, the impact of the GPO and WEP further aggravates recruitment and retention challenges.

The House of Representatives recently passed H.R. 82 with overwhelming bipartisan support—327 to 75. Now is the time to act. We respectfully ask you to prioritize passage of S. 597 in this current Congress which has 62 cosponsors, a filibuster proof majority.

Please champion the fair treatment of educators, firefighters, law enforcement officers, and other public servants who have faithfully served our Kentucky communities. As organizations representing thousands of dedicated Kentuckians, we are asking you to champion this cause for fairness by voting to repeal GPO and WEP. It is not only a matter of fairness but also a step toward ensuring a sustainable future for the public service professions that form the backbone of our communities and our Commonwealth.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter and urge your leadership in passing the Social Security Fairness Act during the 118th Congress.

Sincerely,

Eddie Campbell
President, Kentucky Education Association (KEA)

Joe Baer
President, Kentucky Professional Fire Fighters (KPFF)

Berl Purdue, Jr.
President, Kentucky State Fraternal Order of Police (FOP)