



Representative Angie King
Ohio's 84th District

House Pension Committee: HCJ 6 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Lightbody, and Members of the House Pension Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 6.

The Windfall Elimination Provision was enacted as a modified benefits program for employees who receive a pension for their public service. It was designed to prevent people from "double dipping" by receiving both a government pension and Social Security benefits. However, it has had the unintended consequence of unfairly reducing Social Security benefits for those who have worked in positions not covered by Social Security, such as teachers, police officers, and firefighters. Under the Windfall Elimination Provision, public employees can have their Social Security earning potential lowered by up to 50% due to also earning a public pension.

There are currently more than 1.7 million people in the Ohio Public Retirement System that are effected by Windfall Elimination Provision. These people have dedicated their lives to public service, often receiving lower pay and fewer benefits than their private-sector counterparts. The Windfall Elimination

Provision punishes them for their service by significantly reducing their hard-earned Social Security benefits, leaving many retirees struggling to make ends meet.

For these retirees, repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision is a matter of fairness and justice. It would provide them with the full Social Security benefits to which they are entitled and paid into, easing the financial burden that many people face in their golden years. It is past time for Congress to act and end this unjust policy.

Since taking office constituents have shared their personal stories with me regarding how they have been, or will be, impacted by the Windfall Elimination Provision. I'd like to briefly share a few of their stories. A dedicated public servant, whose spouse passed unexpectedly, could not collect the Social Security death benefits of her husband of 35 years, because she was employed by county government at the time of his passing.

Many thoughtfully planned and saved for retirement, and in many cases worked two jobs to prepare for their later years, only to learn of the unfair penalty at their time of filing. Others, after working in the private sector and paying into social security, changed vocations to become a dispatcher, teacher, or secretary for local government. These individuals carefully calculated their social security contributions and were shocked to learn at retirement that they too had been unfairly penalized and their social security benefits substantially reduced; simply because they received a modest government pension.

Yet, if these individuals held a private-sector pension there would be no such penalty. These inequities must be addressed. We are calling on Congress to

take action and to eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset. If you paid into Social Security, the government should not punish you and take your lawfully earned benefits just because you're a fire fighter, police officer or work at a county office.

I urge you to support the repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision and stand in solidarity with the thousands of retirees across the country who have been harmed by this unfair policy. Chairman Young, Ranking Member Lightbody and members of the committee thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I respectfully ask for your support. At this time I would like to ask joint sponsor, Representative Phil Plummer, to provide his comments.