



SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OHIO

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The Honorable Kristina Roegner
Chair, Senate Government Oversight Committee
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square
1st Floor, Room 142
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: HCR 6

Dear Senator Roegner:

The School Employees Retirement System of Ohio (SERS) wholeheartedly supports efforts like HCR 6 to encourage Congress to find a permanent legislative solution for our retirees who have been negatively impacted and members who will be unfairly disadvantaged by the current Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) or Government Pension Offset (GPO) when they retire. Because a significant majority of our membership works in low-paying school support positions, the reduction of the modest Social Security benefits they earned during previous work in private sector jobs is enough to cause additional financial hardship in retirement.

In a non-Social Security state like Ohio, public employees who qualify for a pension are subject to significant WEP or GPO reductions. In a SERS membership survey, 54% of our members said they paid into Social Security for 11-20 years, which means they will lose the maximum per month in Social Security benefits they earned.

Even though SERS educates members about the WEP and GPO penalties long before they retire, most members do not realize the financial impact until they file for Social Security benefits. The biggest complaint is that members believe they should receive the Social Security benefits they earned over the course of their careers. Other than full repeal, a choice for members between a revised WEP formula and the current formula could help these members receive a fairer calculation of their Social Security benefit. Further, a monthly payment for retirees to offset the current WEP penalty would help them significantly. A similar approach to GPO could be considered as well.

We believe a bi-partisan solution must be found to this ongoing problem and are encouraged by the continuing efforts to address this issue. Only a bi-partisan solution has a realistic chance to become law. We look forward to continuing to work with the members of the Ohio congressional delegation, both House and Senate, to address the inequities in the current WEP and GPO calculations.

If we can provide any further information to you, please let us know. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Richard Stensrud
Executive Director

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