ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
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Sponsor Statement
Senate Joint Resolution 12

Urging the United States Congress to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset of the Social Security Act.

SJR 12 urges Congress to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) of the Social Security Act. The WEP cuts the Social Security benefits of public employees in Alaska if they plan to switch between the public sector and private sector or military. In 2021, this loss could be as much as $498 per month, or about $6,000 a year. The GPO cuts spousal or widows' benefits for public employees for no reason other than their work in the public sector. This cut could amount to as much as 2/3rds the value of the individual's government pension.

Because Alaska is one of few states that does not offer a defined benefit plan or coverage for social security, the WEP and GPO affect more Alaskans per capita than any other state. Public employees in Alaska are being punished for choosing to work in public service.

The WEP and GPO negatively impact recruitment and retention of Alaska public employees such as firefighters, police officers and especially teachers. Those who do not want to be subject to these provisions will simply look elsewhere for employment. Punishing individuals for choosing public service runs counter to retaining dedicated Alaskan workers and recruiting the best of the best to Alaska.

Passage of SJR 12 will demonstrate that the Alaska Legislature opposes arbitrary and unfair cuts to the rightfully earned Social Security benefits of Alaskans.

Alaskans deserve to retire with dignity. I urge your support of SJR 12.