



## **Alaska Council of School Administrators**

Leadership, Unity, and Advocacy for Public Education

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February 12, 2024

Representative Alyse Galvin  
House District 14  
Alaska House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 405  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Galvin:

We are writing to express our strong support for HJR 18 - Social Security Benefit Reduction Repeal. As the sponsor, you are keenly aware that the resolution urges "the United States Congress to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset (WEP-GPO) of the Social Security Act" and is actively seeking to advance the resolution with bipartisan support.

The WEP-GPO provision of the Social Security Act disproportionately penalizes educators and other public employees. Alaska state public employees, including teachers, firefighters, and other public servants, are effectively penalized for sustaining employment with the State of Alaska or other state political subdivisions that participate in the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). The WEP-GPO reduces their social security benefits and has a substantial impact on individual public employees at a time when recruiting and retaining public employees is in crisis. For example, this year, there were over 500 vacant teaching positions in the state on the first day of school.

It is worth noting that the WEP-GPO reduces Social Security spousal and survivor benefits for those recipients, equal to two-thirds of the amount they receive from the public employees' or teachers' retirement system each month. This benefit reduction has a disproportionate impact on the lowest-earning public employees and, especially, teachers. Finally, the State of Alaska has the highest percentage of beneficiaries affected by the WEP-GPO of any other state or territory in the United States.

For these reasons and many others, we strongly support HJR 18 and the work of our congressional delegation to remove this key barrier to the recruitment and retention of key public servants as described.

Best regards,

Dr. Lisa S. Parady  
Executive Director of ACSA