

Session:

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Proudly serving District 14; Spenard, Roger's Park, Midtown, Tudor and College Village

Sponsor Statement

House Joint Resolution 18

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

HJR 18 calls on the United States Congress to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset (together: WEP-GPO) of the federal Social Security Act. Under the auspices of the WEP-GPO, Alaska state public employees including teachers, school nurses, firefighters, fishermen, military, U.S Public Health Service Commissioned Corp and other public servants are effectively penalized for sustaining employment with the State of Alaska or other political subdivisions of the state that participate in the Public Employees’ Retirement System (PERS). The WEP-GPO reduces the amount of social security benefits that these public employees might otherwise receive if they qualify for social security. The federal reduction in benefits under the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset have a substantial impact on individual public employees’ ability to afford retirement via the resultant reduction in Social Security benefits.

In addition, the WEP-GPO reduces Social Security spousal and survivor benefits for those recipients that are due these benefits if they also receive a benefit from a teachers’ retirement or public employees’ retirement system. The amount of benefit reduction that may be experienced by a current or former public employee or teacher who is eligible is 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. 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.

Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in the 118th United States Congress to address the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset. House Joint Resolution 18 urges the US Congress to pass this legislation.