



February 9, 2022

Senator Bill Wielechowski
State Capitol Room 9
Juneau, AK 99801

Honorable Senator Bill Wielechowski,

On behalf of the NEA-Alaska, I am writing in support of SJR 12.

As you know, Alaska's educators support repealing the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

Alaska educators join the profession from a variety of backgrounds, whether directly out of college or as a second career. In many cases, educators supplement their income through working second jobs, running a small business, or pursuing seasonal employment during the summer. Through their secondary employment, these individuals earn Social Security benefits which are automatically deducted from their paychecks. However, as a result of their enrollment in TRS/PERS, they are subject to GPO-WEP.

Alaska's educators and public servants hired after 2006 are particularly vulnerable to both of these provisions. Those hired after 2006 are not eligible for a pension but rather have a 401k style Defined Contribution (DC) retirement. Not only is the GPO-WEP unfair and impactful to retirees with state pensions, but also to any member of the Alaska Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and Teacher Retirement System (TRS) who do not have a defined benefit.

These offsets penalize people who have dedicated at least part of their career to working with our students as educators. As Alaska continues to struggle to attract and retain a high-quality educator workforce, GPO-WEP makes this more challenging as second career prospective hires will lose a portion of their previously earned Social Security benefits.

Thank you for introducing SJR 12 and sending a clear message to Alaska's Congressional Delegation that the Alaska Legislature supports their efforts to repeal the GPO-WEP.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tom Klaameyer

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