



SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OHIO

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RICHARD STENSURD
Executive Director

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Deputy Executive Director

August 23, 2022

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee
2309 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member, House Ways and Means Committee
1011 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Windfall Elimination Provision Bills

Dear Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady:

As this congressional session begins to approach its conclusion the School Employees Retirement System of Ohio (SERS) urges you to redouble your efforts to find a permanent legislative solution for our retirees who have been impacted and members who will be unfairly disadvantaged by the current Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) when they retire.

Our members are the non-teaching public school employees of Ohio. They work in the lowest-paid positions in the schools: bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, teacher's aides, secretaries, and administrative support staff. 68% are women, and they earn on average \$23,944 per year. New retirees average only \$18,432 per year in pension benefits.

In a non-Social Security state like Ohio, public employees who qualify for a pension are subject to significant WEP 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.

Because the vast majority of our membership works in low-paying school support positions, the reduction of the modest Social Security benefits they earned is enough to cause additional financial hardship in retirement.

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. Both the Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act (HR 2337) and the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act (HR 5834) include positive provisions that reflect that approach.

RETIREMENT BOARD

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Chair, Appointed-Member

FRANK A. WEGLARZ
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HUGH GARSIDE, JR
Employee-Member

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JAMES A. ROSSLER, JR
Appointed Member

DANIEL L. WILSON
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Honorable Richard Neal
Honorable Kevin Brady
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This issue is too important to allow another legislative cycle to pass without progress. We believe a compromise solution can be found between your two proposals and are encouraged by the continuing efforts by you both to address this issue. We look forward to working with you, the members of the House Ways and Means Committee, as well as the members of the Ohio delegation, both House and Senate, to overcome the differences between these two bills and address the inequities in the current WEP before the end of this Congress.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Richard Stensrud
Executive Director

c: House Ways and Means Committee members
Ohio Delegation Congressional Members

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