

# WEST COAST COALITION

---



**PORAC**



WASHINGTON  
COUNCIL of  
POLICE &  
SHERIFFS



**APDeA**  
Anchorage Police Department  
Employees Association

**For Immediate Release:**

November 12, 2024

**Contact:**

Melanie Tuberman

[MTuberman@fionahuttonassoc.com](mailto:MTuberman@fionahuttonassoc.com)

(607) 744-0784

## West Coast Law Enforcement Coalition Celebrates Historic House Passage of Social Security Fairness Act

*Rank-and-File Police Officers from Across the West Coast Applaud the House of Representatives for Advancing Historic Legislation That Will Restore Fair Social Security Benefits for Public Servants*

**Washington, D.C.** – The West Coast Coalition, representing rank-and-file law enforcement officers from California, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, and Alaska, is proud to celebrate a historic victory for public servants across the country as the [Social Security Fairness Act \(H.R. 82\)](#) passed the House of Representatives. Following the successful [discharge petition](#) filed by Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA) forced a vote on the House floor, the bill secured majority support from the House of Representatives and will now advance to the Senate for consideration. If passed by the Senate and signed into law, the bill would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) – two federal provisions that have unfairly reduced retirement benefits for millions of peace officers and their families for more than four decades.

"We are witnessing a historic moment as the *Social Security Fairness Act* has now passed the House of Representatives," said **Brian R. Marvel, President of the [Peace Officers Research Association of California](#)**. "After more than forty years advocating on this issue, we have seen firsthand how the WEP and GPO have unjustly penalized retirement security for those who dedicated their lives to public service. I am deeply grateful to Representatives Graves and Spanberger for their leadership, to all the representatives who cosponsored this important legislation and cast a 'yes' vote today, and to our coalition advocates who stood with us in our fight to right this decades-long wrong."

"As a peace officer, you dedicate your life to serving your community, often sacrificing the opportunity for a better-paying job in the private sector. To then be penalized in retirement because of GPO and WEP is deeply unjust," said **Aaron Schmutz, President of the [Oregon Coalition of Police & Sheriffs \(ORCOPS\)](#)**. "Officers who are forced to retire early, often due to physical or emotional stress, deserve the financial security they've paid into. The House passage of the *Social Security Fairness Act* is a critical step in correcting this unfair policy and ensuring peace officers get the respect and security they've earned."

Representing rank-and-file officers from across five states, the members of the West Coast Coalition have been fighting to eliminate these unjust provisions for years. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) have affected more than 3 million peace officers, teachers, firefighters, and other public employees, reducing or eliminating the Social Security benefits they've earned, simply because they also receive a government pension. This has left millions of public servants and their families financially vulnerable in retirement.

"Many of our members, after decades of service, take on second careers to support their families only to face a devastating reduction in their Social Security benefits due to WEP and GPO," said **Christopher Tracy, President of the [Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs \(WACOPS\)](#)**. "It is unconscionable that those who protect the public are denied the financial stability they've paid into throughout their working lives. The *Social Security Fairness Act* is more than overdue – it's a matter of respect and dignity for our nation's public servants. We thank all the House members who voted yes today for taking this much-needed step toward repealing these harmful provisions."

"Peace officers in Hawaii, like across the nation, deserve better than having their earned retirement benefits stripped away because of outdated federal policies like WEP and GPO," said **Robert Cavaco, President of the [State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers \(SHOPO\)](#)**. "For years, these provisions have created unnecessary hardship for officers and their families. The House passing this bill is a beacon of hope for the dedicated individuals who risk their lives daily and now face financial uncertainty in retirement. It's time to restore what's rightfully theirs and honor their commitment to public service."

Authored by Representatives Garrett Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), and Senators Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Susan Collins (R-ME), the *Social Security Fairness Act* seeks to repeal these outdated and harmful provisions. It has garnered widespread bipartisan support, with 330 cosponsors in the House and 62 in the Senate. The West Coast Coalition has long advocated for the repeal of WEP and GPO, and, while the bill has yet to be considered by the Senate, House passage represents a significant step toward achieving fairness for those who have spent their careers protecting and serving their communities.

"Our officers in Alaska have spent years dedicated to keeping their communities safe, only to face an unwelcome shock when they learn that their Social Security benefits are unfairly reduced due to WEP and GPO," said **Shaun Kuzakin, President of the [Public Safety Employees Association, Local 803](#)**. "Many had no idea these provisions even existed until years into their careers. We stand alongside our colleagues across the country in calling for the repeal of these punitive policies. This House passage is a significant step toward restoring the retirement security they've earned, and we urge the Senate to act swiftly."

"Officers who have put in decades of service, often at the cost of their own health, should not be left struggling in retirement. The WEP and GPO provisions punish those who've sacrificed the most for public safety, robbing them of financial stability in their later years," said **Darrell Evans, President of [Anchorage Police Department Employees Association](#)**. "Repealing these provisions isn't just a financial necessity--- it's a moral one. With House passage secured, we are closer than ever to securing the benefits that our members have earned, and I applaud the authors, cosponsors, and those who voted to make this happen and correct this injustice."

###

### **About the West Coast Law Enforcement Coalition**

The West Coast Law Enforcement Coalition was established in 2023 with the goal of bringing together the law enforcement organizations that represent the West Coast's rank-and-file to advocate for new laws, policies, and programs that will advance the profession of law enforcement and improve public safety nationwide. The West Coast Coalition currently includes four statewide organizations representing California, Washington, Oregon and Hawaii, as well as two local associations representing Alaska.