

# WEST COAST COALITION

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**For Immediate Release:**

October 1, 2024

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## West Coast Law Enforcement Coalition Applauds Advancement of Social Security Fairness Act in Congress

*Bipartisan Discharge Petition Forces Historic Vote in the House of Representatives to Repeal the Windfall Enforcement Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO)*

**Washington, D.C.** – The West Coast Coalition, representing rank-and-file law enforcement officers from California, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, and Alaska, is celebrating a monumental achievement for public servants across the country as the [Social Security Fairness Act \(H.R. 82\)](#) reaches a key milestone. On Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, the [discharge petition](#) filed by Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA) achieved the requisite 218 signatures to force a vote on the House floor. If passed by both chambers 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.

"This discharge petition marks a critical victory in our long fight for fair retirement benefits for peace officers and public servants," said **Brian R. Marvel, President of the [Peace Officers Research Association of California \(PORAC\)](#)**. "For over 40 years, the WEP and GPO have unjustly penalized those who dedicated their lives to serving their communities. We are deeply grateful to Representatives Graves and Spanberger, and to all who signed this discharge petition, for standing 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 Schmautz, 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 discharge petition forcing a vote on 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 tens of thousands of peace officers 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 the authors and all the members of congress who signed the discharge petition 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. This historic move 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 329 cosponsors in the House and 62 in the Senate, making this a truly historic moment for public employees across the country. 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, this 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 anticipated vote is a significant step toward restoring the retirement security they've earned, and we urge Congress 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. We are closer than ever to securing the benefits that our members have earned, and I applaud the authors, cosponsors, and those who signed the discharge petition to make this vote happen and correct this injustice."

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### **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, Oregon, Washington and Hawaii, as well as two local associations representing Alaska.