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September 15, 2015

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, I write to urge you to support an important piece of legislation that would protect the economic and retirement security of hard working teachers, fire fighters, and countless other municipal, county, and state employees whose retirement benefits are affected negatively due to federal law.

The Government Pension Offset (GPO)/ Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)

As you know, the Government Pension Offset is a Social Security provision that penalizes individuals who apply for Social Security spousal or survivor benefits, if they themselves worked for a state or local government in non-SS-covered employment and are entitled to a government pension from that employment. Once they receive that benefit, their earned Social Security spousal or survivor benefits will be reduced by two-thirds of their non-SS-covered pension.

The Windfall Elimination Provision affects individuals who apply for their own (not spousal) Social Security benefits. If you do not have 30 years of "substantial income" in Social Security covered work, a complex formula will significantly reduce your benefit. The reduction may be no more than one-half of the government pension to which the person is entitled in the initial month of entitlement to the pension.

(Source: <http://www.ssfairness.com/gpo-wep-faq/>)

According to the Congressional Research Service, retirees in 15 states are impacted by the GPO and WEP. Addressing the offsets requires congressional action. On behalf of the 135,000 members of LULAC, I urge you to support legislation introduced by Senator Sherrod Brown and Representative Rodney Davis, (H.R. 973/S. 1651), that would repeal both the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision. Your support of this legislation will help ensure that retiree benefits are protected for all Americans. For more information, please don't hesitate to have your staff contact Luis Torres, LULAC Director of Policy and Legislation, at latorres@lulac.org or by phone at (202) 833-6130.

Sincerely,

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.
LULAC National President