

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2503

March 25, 2009

Mr. Jim Kreider
Executive Director
MRTA
3016 Dupont Circle, Suite B
Jefferson City, Missouri 65109

Dear Friends:

Thank you for contacting me to share your views about the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). I appreciate your writing to me about this important issue and the effect it has on Missourians, especially teachers and public servants.

Under current law, the GPO reduces the amount for which a retiree may be eligible under his or her spouse's Social Security benefits by two-thirds. For example, if a surviving spouse receives both a civil-service pension and a spousal benefit from Social Security, then two-thirds of the value of her civil service pension is used to offset the spousal benefit from Social Security because of the GPO. Originally, the GPO was intended to deny Social Security benefits to individuals who did not pay into the Social Security system. Today, however, this offset is causing reductions never intended.

Similarly, the WEP has been criticized because it effectively reduces the Social Security benefits of workers who simultaneously receive pension benefits not covered by Social Security. The intended purpose of the WEP is to avoid the so-called "double dipping" that results upon receipt of both Social Security and pension benefits. Unfortunately, this provision is an inaccurate way to determine the actual windfall when applied to individual cases.

Congress must support policies that promote and protect retirement savings for all Americans. It is imperative that we address the looming shortfalls in our entitlement programs- Social Security and Medicare. It is my hope that Congress will address the GPO and WEP issues as part of that effort. Again, thank you for contacting me on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Bond
United States Senator

CSB:jh

ROY BLUNT

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April 3, 2009

Jim Kreider
Missouri Retired Teachers Association
3016 Dupont Circle, Suite B
Jefferson City, MO 65109

Dear Jim:

Thank you for contacting me regarding the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

The future of Social Security is a concern for many Americans. Due to the shrinking workforce and the increasing number of eligible beneficiaries, improvements must be made to secure this program for future generations. Everyone who pays into the system has a right to receive benefits from that system. Although it is apparent that this program will need to be reformed in order to ensure its long-term viability, I will work tirelessly to preserve the welfare of Missouri's seniors.

H.R. 235, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2009, was introduced by Congressman Howard Berman on January 7, 2009. This bill, which I have cosponsored, amends title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) (OASDI) of the Social Security Act to repeal: government pension offset requirements applicable to husband's and wife's insurance benefits, widow's and widower's insurance benefits, and mother's and father's insurance benefits with respect to OASDI payments; and windfall elimination requirements with respect to computation of an individual's primary insurance amount. Currently, H.R. 235 is being considered by the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Should this legislation come before the House of Representatives for a vote, I will keep your thoughts in mind. Again, thank you for contacting me. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Sincere regards,



Roy Blunt
Member of Congress

RDB:mk