

Dear Mrs. *****:

Thank you for contacting me with your suggestions regarding efforts to repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). I recognize the time and effort that you are dedicating to actively participate in the democratic process, and I appreciate having the benefit of your comments on this matter.

As a strong supporter of Social Security, I understand the impact both the GPO and the WEP have on educators, police officers, firefighters, and other public employees who have dedicated their lives to public service. Millions of retired Americans have worked many years and contributed their hard-earned money with the expectation Social Security will be available when they retire. They depend on Social Security to help pay their monthly expenses, and the federal government should live up to its obligations.

In the 116th Congress, I cosponsored the Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act (S. 3401), introduced by Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) on March 5, 2020. S. 3401 would phase in a new funding formula for determining benefit amounts under the WEP. This new formula adjusts an individual's total lifetime earnings based on the proportion of those earnings subject to Social Security payroll taxes, and applies to individuals who would become eligible for Social Security benefits in 2022 or later. Individuals becoming eligible between 2022 and 2060 would receive the higher of their benefit under either the current-law WEP or the new formula. According to the Social Security Office of the Chief Actuary, this legislation would have no significant effect on the long-range actuarial balance of the Social Security Trust Fund. S. 3401 was referred to the Committee on Finance where it remained until the end of the 116th Congress. Please know that I will keep your thoughts in mind should this legislation be reintroduced in the 118th Congress.

Without Congressional action, the impending retirement of the Baby Boomer generation and other demographic factors will bankrupt the Social Security Trust Fund in the near future. The Social Security and Medicare Boards of Trustees' 2023 Annual Report shows the programs face massive permanent cash-flow deficits and will continue to grow substantially faster than the economy over the foreseeable future. For example, the Social Security Trust Fund, which covers benefits to retirees, workers' survivors, and people with disabilities, will be able to pay full benefits only until 2034.

Given these challenges, comprehensive Social Security reform is necessary. Therefore, repealing the GPO and WEP should be considered in the context of a complete and fundamental overhaul of the current system. Simply repealing these two provisions without comprehensive, meaningful reform would further damage the long-term solvency of Social Security. The Congressional Budget Office projects that eliminating the GPO and WEP without making other changes to the program would cost over \$180

billion and increase the Social Security Trust Fund deficit by four percent. This would make it more difficult for America to deal with the ongoing retirement of the Baby Boomer generation. I will continue to support proposals improving Social Security benefits received by Social Security participants in a fiscally responsible way and without placing additional burdens on future generations.

I am honored to represent Texas in the United States Senate. Thank you for taking the time to contact me.

Sincerely,

JOHN CORNYN

United States Senator