

NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

328 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.E.
WASHINGTON, DC 20002
PHONE 202-547-8180 • FAX 815-202-547-8190

CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

26 September 2018

The Honorable Peter A. Sessions
Chairman
Committee on Rules
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James P. McGovern
Ranking Member
Committee on Rules
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman and Representative McGovern,

I am writing on behalf of the membership of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of the strong support for an amendment offered by Representative Garret N. Graves (R-LA) to be made in order during the consideration of H.R. 6757, the "Family Savings Act." The amendment contains the text of one of the FOP's top priorities, H.R. 1205, the "Social Security Fairness Act," a bipartisan bill with 190 cosponsors in the House.

The amendment proposes to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) in current Social Security law. We believe the underlying bill, which aims to increase the savings and retirement security of Americans, is a perfect fit for this important Social Security reform. Not only will it assist retired public employees by restoring the Social Security benefit they earned during the course of their careers, but it will correct a profound unfairness in current law.

When the WEP was enacted in 1983, its stated purpose was to remove a "windfall" for persons who spent some time in jobs not covered by Social Security and who also worked other jobs where they paid Social Security taxes long enough to qualify for retirement benefits. This provision has created a very real inequity for many public employees, particularly law enforcement officers, who retire earlier than other government employees and often begin second careers which require them to pay into the Social Security system. Law enforcement officers who had second careers face as much as a sixty percent (60%) cut to the Social Security benefits. This is a reduction of a benefit to which they are entitled because they paid into the system--not an adjustment for a "windfall."

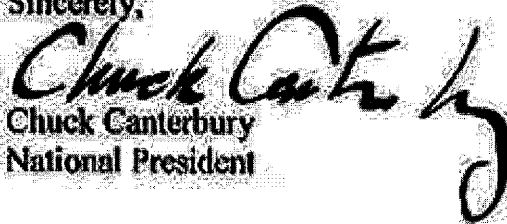
Similarly, the GPO offsets the Social Security benefit to which a surviving spouse is entitled by two-thirds of the monthly amount of any government pension that they might receive. For example, the widow of a retired law enforcement officer who collected a government pension of \$1,200 would be *ineligible* to collect the Social security survivor's benefit of \$600. Two-thirds of \$1,200 is \$800, which is greater than the spouse's benefit of \$600 and thus making her unable to collect it. If the spouse's benefit was \$900, she would collect only \$100, because \$800 would be "offset" by the government pension. Again, the FOP believes this is a matter of fairness and that the offset scheme currently in place penalizes those employees least able to afford it. Law enforcement officers are

especially affected because, like many public employees, a significant number of officers are not part of the Social Security system.

Ultimately, the "Social Security Fairness Act" is about fairness to public employees who served their communities. These Americans were employed by local governments which chose decades ago to construct a retirement system separate from Social Security—a decision for which they should not be penalized if they earn a Social Security benefit through other work just because of their public service.

On behalf of the more than 335,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, I urge the Committee on Rules to support the Graves amendment. If I can be of any additional help or provide additional information about this important issue, please feel free to contact me or Executive Director Jim Pasco in my Washington office.

Sincerely,


Chuck Canterbury
National President