



# NALC FACT SHEET

Department of Legislative and Political Affairs — National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

100 Indiana Ave. NW — Washington, DC 20001-2144 — 202-393-4695 — [www.nalc.org](http://www.nalc.org) © NALC

January 20, 2012

## Government Pension Offset

**E**mployees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) who retired December 1982 and later are affected by the Government Pension Offset (GPO). The GPO reduces or eliminates the Social Security spouse or survivor benefits for which a federal retiree may be eligible based on the Social Security record of his or her spouse. The retiree's Social Security "spousal" benefit is cut by an amount equal to two-thirds of the retiree's CSRS annuity.

There have been many attempts to fashion legislation to address this unfair law. Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-CA) and Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon have taken this issue up in the past several sessions of Congress with companion bills in the House and Senate. Each bill garnered significant bipartisan support but always fell short of receiving a committee vote and therefore were never scheduled for floor action.

In the 109th Congress, Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) re-introduced her proposal from the previous Congress as well. Her bill would have eliminated the offset for anyone whose combined CSRS annuity and Social Security spousal benefit was \$1,200 per month or less. For those receiving more than \$1,200 per month, the two-thirds offset would apply only to amounts over \$2,000.

In the 110th Congress, Sen. Feinstein re-introduced her bill, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2007 (S. 206) and Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) introduced the companion bill in the House (H.R. 82). Both bills were designed to repeal the offset.

On Nov. 6, 2007, Sen. John Kerry (D-MA), chairman of the Finance Subcommittee on Social Security, Pensions and Family Policy, held a hearing on the GPO as well as the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). On the House side, Rep. Michael McNulty (D-NY), chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security, held a similar hearing on Jan. 16, 2008. Both hearings were the first held on the subject in several years. Witnesses included representatives from the Government Accounting Office, members of Congress and retired federal workers. The hearings were a positive step forward in this ongoing battle.

In the 112th Congress now in session, Rep. McKeon re-introduced his bill, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2011 (H.R. 1332) on April 1, 2011. Senator Kerry also re-introduced his bill (S.2010) on December 16, 2011.

The NALC continues to make addressing the GPO a major part of its lobbying efforts before Congress.