

Social Security Fairness Act reintroduced in House; introduction of other priority bills expected soon

On Jan. 9, Reps. Garrett Graves (R-LA) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) reintroduced the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023 (H.R. 82). This bill would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), which are parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of federal annuitants, including former Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) letter carriers.

WEP reduces earned Social Security benefits for CSRS employees and Federal Employees Retirement System employees who also receive a public pension from another job not covered by Social Security. In addition, WEP affects employees who move from a job in which they earn Social Security to a job where they do not earn the Social Security benefit.

GPO affects CSRS employees and the spousal benefits of people who work as federal, state or local government employees if the job is not covered by Social Security. GPO currently reduces by two-thirds the benefit received by surviving spouses who also collect a government pension.

The bill, which received a supermajority of co-sponsors in the 117th Congress, already had 59 co-sponsors as this magazine was going to print. Despite consistent bipartisan support, the legislation has proved difficult to pass due to the price tag.

NALC is prioritizing this bill and will continue actively working to gain support for it so that letter carriers can receive the full benefits they earned.

At press time, H.R. 82 was NALC's only priority bill that had been introduced in the 118th Congress. The Federal Retirement

ment Fairness Act, which would allow certain federal employees, including letter carriers, to make catch-up contributions for time spent as non-career employees before transitioning to career status is expected to be reintroduced soon. NALC is also monitoring the anticipated reintroduction of two resolutions. One that would maintain door delivery for all businesses and residential customers and another that would oppose postal privatization ensuring that the Postal Service remains an independent establishment.

Notably, NALC does not have to wait for a bill guaranteeing six-day mail and package delivery to be introduced. Six-day delivery was codified with the enactment of the Postal Service Reform Act last year.

Stay tuned to the "Government Affairs" section of nalc.org for news and updated fact sheets on NALC's priority bills. **PR**

NALC makes regional, HQ appointments

NALC President **Brian L. Renfroe** named **Ben Paul** a regional administrative assistant (RAA) for Region 9 (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina).

The son of an American Postal Workers Union (APWU) member, Paul joined the Postal Service as a clerk in 2005 and transferred to the carrier craft in 2006, joining Lakeland, FL Branch 1779.

Paul has served NALC in several roles, including Step B representative, branch newsletter editor, health benefits representative, route adjustment team lead and congressional district liaison. He graduated from arbitration advocacy training in 2015.



Ben Paul

Paul was elected branch executive vice president in 2014. He also served as branch assistant secretary-treasurer.

The president appointed **Stephanie Baiungo** as a full-time advocate (FTA) for Regions 1 (California, Hawaii, Nevada and the territory of Guam) and 2 (Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah and Washington).

Baiungo started her postal career in Medford, MA, as a part-time flexible in 1996, joining Boston Branch 34. She transferred to Las Vegas, NV, in 2000 and became a member of Branch 2502, where she served as a steward, food drive coordinator and safety captain.

She was named a Formal Step A



Stephanie Baiungo

designee and served on the 2011 route inspection team. In 2015, she became an arbitration advocate. She also has worked as a national assigned assistant (NAA) for Region 1 and as a member of the National Uniform Committee.

Baiungo graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2016.

Renfroe appointed **Ron Osborne** as an assistant to the president for administrative affairs.

After serving in the Army from 1988 to 1998, Osborne began his postal career in 2000 as a casual carrier in Springfield, KY, joining Louisville Branch 14. He became a shop steward in 2005 and a Formal A designee in 2009. Osborne was appointed a branch trustee in 2014



Ron Osborne

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and was elected branch vice president in 2019.

Osborne also served as vice president of the Kentucky State Association, route adjustment district lead team member and arbitration advocate for Region 6. And he assisted the City Delivery Task Force in the develop-

ment and operation of the current TIAREAP joint route adjustment process.

Osborne graduated from the NALC Leadership Academy in 2018.

Oscar Ferreira was named assistant to the president for city delivery.

Oscar Ferreira

A member of Fort Lauderdale, FL Branch 2550, Ferreira began carrying the mail in 2015. He became a steward the next year and then served as a Formal A representative, dispute resolution team member and arbitration advocate. He was elected recording secretary for his branch in 2020, a position he held until his current appointment.