News from Washington

House committee holds hearing on WEP and GPO repeal

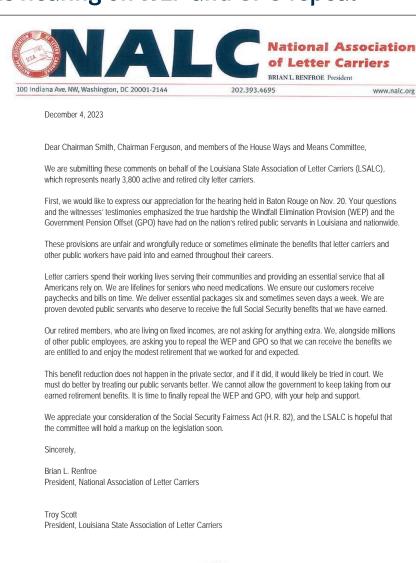
n Nov. 21, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing on the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R. 82). The bill would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), parts of Social Security law that unfairly reduce, or sometimes eliminate, Social Security benefits of public employees, including letter carriers, who have earned pension benefits from public employee pension plans such as the Civil Service Retirement System.

The hearing was held at the St. George Fire Department Station 60 in Baton Rouge, LA, a city in Rep. Garrett Graves's (R-LA) district. Graves co-leads the bipartisan bill with Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA).

Witnesses, all from Louisiana, included Patrick Yoes, national president of the Fraternal Order of Police; Ann Dugas, retired state employee; Bernard Piro, retired firefighter; and Paula Porter, retired teacher.

The hearing brought awareness to the issue through the testimonies of the witnesses who are affected by the WEP and GPO. Several witnesses said they did not know about the impact of these provisions until after they retired and that they likely would have considered different careers had they been informed. Others stated that if these provisions are not overturned, it will be more difficult to recruit and retain employees.

NALC President Brian L. Renfroe and Louisiana State Association of Letter Carriers President Troy Scott submitted comments to the committee for this field hearing explaining how the WEP and GPO affect letter carriers and the importance of repealing the provisions.



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The next step for the bill, which has 300 co-sponsors, to move forward in the House is for the Committee on Ways and Means to schedule a markup.

"NALC appreciates the subcommittee holding a hearing on this important legislation," President Renfroe said. "Far too many letter carriers and other public servants are victimized by the WEP and GPO. They work hard and pay into Social Security throughout their careers and deserve to receive the full benefits they have earned. We urge Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) to prioritize this issue and hold a markup on H.R. 82." PR