
April 2021

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1. Repeal GPO-WEP—What you can do. The “Social Security Fairness Act” (H.R. 82) would fully repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) that unfairly deny educators and other public servants of Social Security benefits they have earned, including those who were covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). What can you do? Contact your Congressperson and ask him/her to cosponsor this bill (HR 82). To find out who your representative is (and how to reach him/her) visit: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative> and type in your zip code.

FEA and NEA have been fighting for this repeal for years. A detailed article appeared in 2008 in the FEA Journal (http://feasonline.org/media/issues/August_2008_GPO_WEP_story.pdf) The Social Security Administration has a fact sheet on both GPO and WEP (<https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10007.pdf> & <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10045.pdf>) Be informed when contacting your law makers.

2. Tax Season Delayed Again! While not quite as long as last year, Congress has delayed the filing of Federal income taxes until May 17, 2021. You will still need to check to see if your state has extended its deadline. NEA-Member Benefits offers discounts for specified tax preparers to NEA members. See www.neamb.com for details.

3. No Medical Billing Surprises within sight. In the Pandemic Relief Bill passed last December, there were provisions to end the balance billing (the practice of charging consumers the difference between the provider charge and the insurer’s allowed amount), ensure that emergency room care is billed at the in-network rates, and relieve consumers of the burden of negotiating surprise bills with providers. Also, enormous air ambulance charges will be banned. The restrictions on these surprise bills go into effect January 1, 2022.

4. FEA Annual Meeting Scheduled for June. Both the FEA Annual Meeting (held in late June) and the NEA Representative Assembly (July 1-3) will be held virtually. As soon as we have the details on how to “log-in” and participate, we will forward that to our retired members. If you have issues or concerns that you would like to have FEA/NEA address, please let us know at: retiredFEA@gmail.com

5. Plexiglass Barriers and the Corona Virus. Plexiglass, polycarbonate and acrylic barriers are often in place in stores, restaurants, and classrooms to protect against the corona virus. Researchers from Washington University (St. Louis) found that they may provide good protection against a direct emission of the virus, however, during regular breathing, viral particles or carrier droplets are small enough to follow the airflow and go around the shield.

The research suggests that people continue to wear face masks, including those environments where plexiglass barriers are in place.

6. NEA-Retired Members Auction Was a Great Success! Last month, NEA held a virtual auction to raise money for the “Fund for Children and Public Education.” Our members donated hundreds of items and raised over \$33,000. These funds help NEA elect candidates that support public education, retirees, and Federal employees. And, while the gavel on the auction has come down, you can still make a donation to the “Fund for Children and Public Education.” Just visit: <https://educationvotes.nea.org/donate/>
