
April 2022

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1. The Push to Repeal GPO-WEP—Now is the time to take action. 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).

NEA is making a major effort to get this legislation out of committee and onto the floor of the House. What can you do? The following link will give you sample language to use to contact your Congressperson: <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/action-center/our-issues/retirement-security> From this page, scroll down to the blue box that says, “Fully Repeal Unfair Social Security Penalties.” In that box, click on “E-mail Congress.”

The push right now is to ask your Representative to urge their colleagues to vote this out of House Ways and Means Committee. If your Representative is on the Ways and Means Committee, modify the letter to urge support of voting it out of committee. (The members of the Ways and Means Committee are listed at the end of this newsletter.)

To find out who your representative is visit: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative> and then enter your zip code.

2. How to Lobby Congress Easily. Remember “NEA’s Education Votes”? It is still there, but the website for letter writing on our issues have been moved to the “NEA Legislative Action Center” (<https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/action-center/our-issues>). You can find many of our issues under “Retirement Security.” From this page, look for the red boxes that say: “Email Congress.”

3. Don’t Forget to Vote—It’s Primary Season. Texas held their State Primary elections last month, and a number of States will hold their primary elections in May. Be sure you are registered and ready to vote. The States coming up next month are: May 3rd is IN and OH; May 10th is NE and WV; May 17th is ID, KY, OR, PA, NC; May 24th is AL, AR, GA, and TX (runoffs). For the complete list of primaries, see the NPR story at: <https://www.ksut.org/2022-03-29/the-2022-midterms-are-underway-heres-the-calendar-of-primary-elections>

4. Required Minimum Distributions. The IRS (for the first time in 20 years) has released new life expectancy tables for the purpose of calculating the required minimum distributions (RMDs) from retirement accounts, including the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The new tables show an increase in life expectancy by a few years, thus reducing the amount needed to be

withdrawn annually to avoid federal tax penalties. There are some exceptions, so be sure to consult your tax advisor/consultant for financial planning. (TSP will automatically send you money from your account at the end of the year, if you are short of the RMD, so you avoid the tax penalties.)

5. Coping with Higher Gasoline Prices. As gas prices continue to rise, a number of organizations (such as AAA and Consumer Reports) are offering suggestions on how to get the most out of every dollar. Some of these suggestions are:

- a. Keep your car aerodynamic by removing roof racks, cargo boxes, and bike racks (when not in use). At highway speeds, one can save 2 to 9 mpg.
- b. Reduce your speed. Driving 10 mph less than posted speeds on highways can save around 7 mpg.
- c. Avoid hard accelerations and excessive braking and once up to speed, maintain a steady pace.
- d. Low tire pressure can affect fuel economy adversely. Find the recommended tire pressure on your car's doorjamb sticker.
- e. Unless recommended by your car's manufacturer, most drivers do not need premium gas.
- f. Use online websites like AAA and GasBuddy to find the best prices in your area.
- g. Try to keep your tank half-full to avoid being caught in a situation where you have to buy more expensive fuel.

6. FEA Annual Meeting Scheduled for June. Both the FEA Annual Meeting (June 30, July 1) and the NEA Representative Assembly (July 2-6) will be held in Chicago, Illinois. As soon as we have the details on our hotel, 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

7. NEA-Retired Members Auction Was a Great Success! Last month, NEA-Retired held both an in-person and virtual auctions to raise money for the "Fund for Children and Public Education." Our members donated hundreds of items and raised over \$16,000 in the online auction alone! 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/>

House Ways and Means Committee Members:

Democratic Members: R. Neal (MA), M. Thompson (CA), L. Doggett (TX), J. Larson (CT), E. Sanchez (CA), E. Blumenauer (OR), R. Kind (WI), B. Pascrell (NJ), D. Davis (IL), B. Higgins (NY), T. Sewell (AL), S. DelBene (WA), J. Chu (CA), G. Moore (WI), D. Kildee (MI), B. Boyle (PA), D. Beyer

(VA), D. Evans (PA), B. Schneider (IL), T. Suozzi (NY), J. Panetta (CA), S. Murphy (FL), J. Gomez (CA), S. Horsford (NV), S. Plaskett (VI)

Republican Members: K. Brady (TX), V. Buchanan (FL), A. Smith (NE), T. Reed (NY), M. Kelly (PA), J. Smith (MO), T. Rice (NC), D. Schweikert (AZ), J. Walorski (IN), D. LaHood (IL), B. Wenstrup (OH), J. Arrington (TX), A. Ferguson (GA), R. Estes (KS), L. Smucker (PA), K. Hern (OK), C. Miller (WV), G. Murphy (NC)
