

June 14, 2012

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate

Dear Senator Feinstein:

We thank you for your diligent efforts to repeal the GPO and WEP over these many years. You have been a great support and inspiration to us. Although we understand that you are working on other legislative items during this Congress, we still would like to see your support for S 2010 seeking repeal of the offsets.

The Windfall Elimination Provision has been shown to be an erroneous way of making the payout of Social Security retirement benefits equitable. The way benefits are calculated can be better determined by using new computerized data systems rather than using an arbitrary method put in place thirty years ago. One retired early childhood educator gets a CalSTRS pension of only \$900 a month from her public school work, but that means her Social Security check from working with the city's childcare program is cut from \$600 to \$300. This is a disgrace!

The primary effect of the Government Pension Offset is to discredit stay-at-home mothers who are legally entitled to half their spouse's earnings, including his contributions to Social Security retirement benefits. Earning as little as half a teacher pension can mean that she is no longer eligible for benefits from the 20 years she may have been a dependent spouse with no earnings.

The GPO has nearly as wide-ranging an effect on widows. If a wife has more than half a teacher pension, she is likely to lose all her husband's widow benefits, in addition to the spousal benefits. This is just another attack on women!

Both of these offsets are bad policy. They only affect about 2% of Social Security benefits and yet cause tremendous harm to the largely low and middle income retirees they affect. The effort to repeal them must continue until there are major revisions in the way Social Security is organized.

Sincerely,

Signed:

Name printed

Address

Other comments: