



Fall Remains Likely Timeframe For Action on WEP

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Bipartisan Support in Congress Remains Strong

JULY 7, 2017: Retirees who have fallen victim to Social Security's dreaded offset laws remain anxious for news of progress on federal reform legislation now pending before Congress.

As members are aware, Mass Retirees has helped to spearhead efforts in recent years to finally resolve the issues of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) laws. A proposal, specific to the issue of the WEP, came close to being acted on by the House in 2016 before being derailed last summer as the impact of the Presidential Election came into full view.

Key to the optimism felt by our Association and our allies across the country is the fact that the WEP reform proposal is now backed by Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress. The proposals lead sponsors are House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX) and the Committee's Ranking Democratic Member Richard Neal (MA). House Speaker Paul Ryan has reportedly given the measure his approval to move forward.

"When we visited Washington in February we were told by Congressional leaders from both parties that the WEP proposal was being target for action this fall, likely in late October or November. As recently as last week, we received news that this timeframe remains on track.

"The general idea is that the language contained in last session's H.R. 711 would become part of a larger piece of legislation. Our hope is that the language will have evolved to allow for a phase out for the so-called 30-year rule, as well as improvements to the retiree rebate," explains Legislative Director Shawn Duhamel. "We really will not know greater details until we get into the fall and can view what progress has been made on other issues, namely healthcare and tax reform."

And has been previously reported, Congress is likely to address the WEP and GPO separately as two distinct pieces of legislation. Action on the WEP would be phase one, followed by a reform of the GPO (spousal benefit).

In the meantime, members are asked to continue contacting their local member of Congress. Ask them to work with Chairman Brady and ranking member Neal to pass WEP reform.

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