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By:  Neave H.C.R. No. 25

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Tens of millions of American workers and their families count on Social Security to provide a reliable minimum income in their retirement; and

WHEREAS, Almost 50 percent of married couples and 75 percent of unmarried persons age 65 and older depend on Social Security for more than half of their total retirement income, and nearly a quarter of the married couples and almost half of the unmarried persons receive 90 percent or more of their income from the program; and

WHEREAS, The Government Pension Offset (GPO), enacted in 1977, and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), enacted in 1983, severely and unfairly penalize recipients of public pensions; and

WHEREAS, The GPO effectively prohibits some retirees from collecting both their own pension and full social security benefits as a surviving spouse; an estimated 9 out of 10 public employees affected by the GPO lose their entire spousal benefit, even though their spouses paid social security taxes for many years; and

WHEREAS, The WEP, which affects benefits paid under Title II of the Social Security Act, lowers Social Security benefits for employees with public pensions, including teachers, law enforcement officers, and firefighters, as well as for their spouses and children, and can deprive a retiree of nearly $450 a month in social security benefits duly earned by that individual; and

WHEREAS, These provisions in practice have had devastating consequences for employees who worked for many years as public servants including teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other public servants; almost two million employees and retirees are affected by either the GPO or the WEP or both; and

WHEREAS, The GPO and WEP as applied to public employees cause tens of thousands of Texas retirees to experience a diminished quality of life or be forced to return to work to make up for the effects of these provisions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to repeal the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision of the Social Security Act; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.