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September 19, 2016

On behalf of the 10,000 members of the Retired State Employees Association (RSEA) of Louisiana, I am writing to respectfully request that you support and vote for passage of H.R. 711, "The Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2015" a bipartisan proposal introduced by Congressmen Kevin Brady (R- TX) and Richard Neal (D-MA).

Our organization has been working for several years to repeal or reform the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) of the Social Security Act. WEP reduces the Social Security benefits that retired public employees earned through payroll tax contributions during Social Security-covered employment (i.e., private-sector employment) based on their non-covered public employment. More than one and a half million retired public employees, from every state, are currently impacted by the WEP, with countless active employees set to fall victim to reduced Social Security benefits upon retirement.

Over the years, we have advocated for a full repeal of the WEP law. However, given the fiscal challenges associated with that effort, we have worked closely with other retirement organizations and associations to find common ground on a meaningful WEP reform proposal. Our collaboration, together with the leadership of both Mr. Brady and Mr. Neal, has resulted in H.R. 711.

H.R. 711 would reform the WEP formula, replacing it with a new Social Security benefit formula designed to more accurately account for years a public employee paid into Social Security versus the years paid into a public pension system in a non-Social Security covered position. As a result of this change, the Social Security actuary has projected that current retirees impacted by WEP would see one-third of their benefit restored. Those becoming eligible for Social Security after January 1, 2017 would have their benefit calculated under the new formula, thus receiving a benefit that more accurately reflects their actual participation in Social Security.

We believe the approach taken in H.R. 711 is not only fair, but also provides a workable solution to a problem we have struggled to resolve for over thirty years. Most importantly, the Social Security Administration has certified the approach taken in H.R. 711 is cost-neutral over the ten year window and actually produces savings over a 75-year horizon. Cost neutrality comes as a result of enhanced benefit accuracy procedures now set to take effect in 2017.

Your support and advocacy for the passage of H.R. 711 will go a long way towards finally achieving positive change for current and future public retirees. With your help, we believe there is a realistic opportunity to advance this bill to the President's desk during the current Congress. Thank you for your consideration in this matter of grave importance to so many!

Sincerely,

Frank L. Jobert, Jr.
Director of Governmental Affairs, RSEA