



## National Association of Letter Carriers Legislative Fact Sheet

### The Government Pension Offset

Employees covered by the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) retiring December 1982 and later are affected by the Government Pension Offset (GPO). The GPO reduces or eliminates the Social Security spouse or survivor benefits for which a federal retiree may be eligible based on the Social Security record of his or her spouse. The retiree's Social Security "spousal" benefit is cut by an amount equal to two-thirds of the retiree's CSRS annuity.

There have been many attempts to fashion legislation to address this unfair law. Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Representative William Jefferson (D-LA) introduced legislation in the last Congress that addressed the GPO. Both bills garnered significant bipartisan support. Both Senator Mikulski's bill, S 611, and Congressman Jefferson's bill, HR 664, have been reintroduced for this 107<sup>th</sup> Congress. The bills would eliminate the offset for anyone whose combined CSRS annuity and spousal Social Security benefit is \$1,200 per month or less. For those receiving more than \$1,200 per month, the two-thirds offset would apply only to amounts over \$1,200.

In addition to the Mikulski and Jefferson bills, two other bills would completely eliminate the GPO. S 1523, drafted by Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA), and HR 2638, introduced by Representative Buck McKeon (R-CA), address both the GPO and the Windfall Elimination Provision, which reduces the benefits of CSRS retirees who also worked in jobs covered under Social Security.

In June 2000, President Sombrotto testified before the House Social Security Subcommittee about the devastating effect of the GPO. The NALC is working hard to see that Congress addresses this issue, and NALC members should contact their representatives thanking them for cosponsoring or urging them to become a cosponsor of legislation addressing the GPO.

**For more information contact the NALC Legislative Department at (202) 393-4695**