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AdNotes Special Edition

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Think You Are Getting Social Security?

Brief History of the GOP and WEP

Back in the 1960's, public employees throughout the country were invited to participate in the Social Security System. Only thirteen states opted not to join Social Security, but to continue in their own state retirement systems. California teachers decided to continue with the STRS, rather than accept the lesser benefits available through the Social Security System. Congress had hoped that all public workers would choose to join the Social Security System, which would have guaranteed its solvency without any expenditure of tax revenues. Therefore, it decided to ensure that no one could get the full value of both a public employee pension and Social Security.

In 1977, the Social Security Act was amended to treat public pensions as Social Security benefits. This meant that the recipients of such pensions were now covered by the so-called "dual-entitlement" rule. Survivor and/or spousal benefits were therefore reduced dollar for dollar by the **Government Pension Offset (GPO)**. In 1983, the rule was changed, so that now there is only a two-thirds reduction.

In 1983, Congress enacted the **Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)**, which affects workers who have earned both Social Security benefits and another public pension benefit as well. Under the provisions of the act, Social Security benefits are reduced for persons who have income from another public pension plan. Both the GPO and the WEP affect teachers and their spouses adversely. They also discourage people from entering teaching from another profession.

YOUR ACTION IS NEEDED NOW

The National Education Association (NEA) needs your help to put pressure on lawmakers to repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). It is time for Congress to act! From April 10-21, Members of Congress will be on recess and back in their home districts. This is the time they need to hear from you.

Go to WWW.GGEA.ORG for contact information for your local U. S. Representatives and U.S. Senators.