

# Ohio Retirement Systems

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June 29, 2021

The Honorable John Larson, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security  
The Honorable Tom Reed, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Social Security  
Subcommittee on Social Security  
Ways & Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Larson and Ranking Member Reed,

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this letter as part of the record of the June 15, 2021 hearing of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee entitled, "Equity in Social Security: In Their Own Words" from the Ohio Retirement Systems (ORS).

Collectively referred to as the ORS, the individual systems are the Highway Patrol Retirement System of Ohio, the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System, the School Employees Retirement System of Ohio, and the State Teachers Retirement System of Ohio. There are approximately 1,711,540 members in the systems and about 453,378 beneficiaries and recipients.

As the hearing witnesses conveyed, Social Security plays an important role in the lives of many. The most significant issue concerning the members and retirees of the ORS was mentioned by one of the witnesses, Mary Widmier, Ed.D, Texas, which is the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). No state has felt the impact of the WEP more acutely than Ohio, which has a higher percentage of non-covered public workers than any other state. This offset currently impacts more than 148,000 Ohioans, diminishing their retirement security and reducing their ability to provide for themselves and their families.

On behalf of the ORS retirees who are receiving a reduced Social Security benefit due to WEP and our active members who anticipate receiving a Social Security benefit in the future, we respectfully request the Subcommittee to enact an equitable solution. As Dr. Widmier very succinctly stated, "We are not asking for more than we paid into the system. We are simply asking for a more equitable formula."

We appreciate the important bipartisan work of Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, Richard Neal and Ranking Member Kevin Brady to achieve a fair and reasonable reform of WEP. As the members of the Subcommittee know, WEP is not a partisan issue. It impacts Ohio's teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other public employees indiscriminately. We believe there is an incredible opportunity this year to capitalize on Chairman Neal's and Ranking Member Brady's efforts to reach a bipartisan solution that would provide welcome relief to so many.

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On behalf of the retirees and active members of the ORS, thank you for your time and attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,



Karen E. Carraher, Executive Director  
Ohio Public Employees Retirement System



William J. Neville, Executive Director  
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Richard Stensrud, Executive Director  
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Carl Roark, Executive Director  
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Cc: Kathryn Olson, Majority Staff Director, Subcommittee on Social Security  
Amy Shuart, Minority Staff Director, Subcommittee on Social Security  
Ohio Delegation Members

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