

January 12, 2017

The Honorable Vicente Gonzalez
United States House of Representatives
113 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Gonzalez,

On behalf of the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) and the 3,299 ATPE members in your district, we congratulate you on your recent election to the United States House of Representatives.

As the preeminent educator association in Texas, ATPE serves Texas teachers, para-educators, administrators, and all public education employees in its support of the Texas public school system. We are a member-owned, member-governed professional association with more than 100,000 members, making us the leading educator association in Texas and the largest independent association of public school educators in the nation.

Among our federal legislative priorities, ATPE is committed to repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) formula, a provision under current law that unfairly reduces Social Security benefits for educators and other public service retirees who are eligible for both Social Security and government pensions. Since the provision was established in 1983, the WEP has created unintended consequences to the detriment of the education profession, and now, one of the largest beneficiary populations subjected to the WEP hails from Texas.

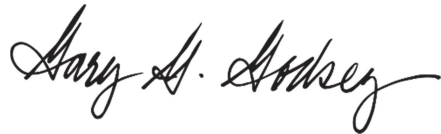
The ***Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2015 (H.R. 711)*** will be re-introduced by Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX) in the 115th Congress and will provide some relief to thousands of Texas public educators and public service employees. We hope you will join us in supporting this and other efforts to repeal and replace the WEP with a new, more balanced formula.

ATPE was pleased with the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) during the 114th Congress, which necessarily addressed many outdated policies and burdensome requirements. We applauded the overall objectives of the law to restore more state and local control and supported efforts to limit the federal government's role in K-12 accountability and testing. As Texas works on its state plan under the new law, we will continue to oversee its implementation and keep you informed.

We hope you will consider us as a resource on education policies that affect our Texas educators, school children, and public schools. Please do not hesitate to reach out to ATPE Governmental Relations Director Jennifer Canaday at jcanaday@atpe.org or David Pore with ATPE's DC federal relations team at david.pore@apks.com.

Once again, congratulations on your election and we look forward to working with you and your staff on issues that affect Texas public educators.

Sincerely,



Gary G. Godsey
Executive Director