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November 8, 2021

The Honorable Veronica Escobar
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Escobar:

The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. ATPE is the leading educator association in Texas, with approximately 100,000 members statewide, including over 1,500 members in your congressional district (TX-16). We write to you today to express ATPE's support for two bipartisan bills, H.R. 5834 by Rep. Brady (R-TX) and H.R. 2337 by Rep. Neal (D-MA), and ask that you cosponsor both of these important pieces of legislation.

The two bills, Brady's H.R. 5834, the "[Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act of 2021](#)" (ETPSA), and Neal's H.R. 2337, the "[Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act](#)" (PSPFA), would repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)—a provision ATPE believes unfairly penalizes Texas educators and other government workers by arbitrarily reducing their earned Social Security benefits. Both bills would replace the WEP with a new proportional formula that would increase Social Security payments for most retirees who would otherwise be penalized by the WEP.

In addition to creating a better formula for future retirees, both the ETPSA and PSPFA would provide a monthly stipend to educators over the age of 60 who are eligible for Social Security and already retired. Under both bills, the retiree stipend would automatically increase over time at the same rate as Social Security. The ETPSA includes a "hold harmless" clause that ensures all current and future Texas educators between 21–59 years of age receive the highest Social Security benefit available to them under either the existing WEP or the new law if passed. The PSPFA includes a similar provision that would function in perpetuity, including for individuals not yet born at the time of the bill's enactment. This provision is costly to the Social Security trust fund and would require a general revenue transfer to pay for it, while the ETPSA would be revenue-neutral to the trust fund in the long term.

Congressmen Brady and Neal have worked together for years as champions for WEP reform, collaborating often with ATPE and other stakeholders to craft legislation capable of earning enough bipartisan support to pass and provide a real benefit to current and future retired educators. We hope this process will continue and that these two bills can be reconciled and move forward as a bipartisan solution to the negative impact the WEP continues to have on educators, police officers, firefighters, and other public employees.

ATPE respectfully requests that you support the active and retired educators in your district by adding your name as a cosponsor to both bipartisan bills, H.R. 5834 and H.R. 2337. Additionally, we ask that you contact both Congressman Brady and Congressman Neal and urge them to reach a compromise *now* on WEP reform. Please feel free to reach out to our federal governmental relations consultant, David Pore, at dpore@hslawmail.com with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shannon Holmes
ATPE Executive Director

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atpe.org