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Representative Kane calls repeal of federal WEP/GPO a major victory for MA retirees

Congress sends Social Security Fairness Act to President's desk

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury) is calling Congress' passage of the Social Security Fairness Act a “major victory for Massachusetts retirees” as it clears the way for the repeal of the federal Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset.

Less than two weeks after Representative Kane and members of the Massachusetts House Republican Caucus sent a letter to Senators Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey calling on them to rally their colleagues in support of HR82, federal lawmakers have passed the bill and sent it to President Joe Biden for his signature.

Representative Kane noted the U.S. Senate, in an overwhelming show of bipartisan support, passed the federal reform bill on a vote of 76-20 in the early morning hours of December 21. The U.S. House of Representatives had previously approved the measure on a similar bipartisan vote of 327-75.

In an e-mail to Massachusetts legislators following the Senate vote, Mass Retirees Association Chief Executive Officer Shawn Duhamel wrote that “Tonight’s historic vote marks the end of a 41-year battle to undo two unfair and unjust federal laws, which currently harm nearly 3 million public retirees.”

The Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset were both approved in 1983 to help shore up the federal Social Security program, but Representative Kane said both policies have significantly reduced Social Security retirement benefits for many public service employees over the last four decades, including police, firefighters and teachers. Repealing these two policies will provide enhanced Social Security benefits for close to 3 million public retirees in Massachusetts and across the country, while protecting surviving spouses from seeing a reduction in benefits.

In their December 12 letter to Markey and Warren, the members of the House Republican Caucus wrote that passing the Social Security Fairness Act “will truly make a positive difference in many of our constituents’ lives” by “providing them with enhanced financial security during their golden years.”

President Biden is expected to sign the bill.

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