

# GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

## House committee advances Social Security Fairness Act; contact your representative to bring it to the House floor

Sep 20, 2022

Today, in a voice vote, the House Committee on Ways and Means approved the Social Security Fairness Act of 2021 ([H.R. 82](#)). The bill would repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) titles of the Social Security Act, which unfairly reduce or sometimes eliminate Social Security benefits for millions of federal workers, including letter carriers. H.R. 82, introduced by Reps. Rodney Davis (R-IL) and Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), has a strong bipartisan consensus with 300 cosponsors. “The millions of public service workers across the country who are being unfairly punished by the Social Security Act deserve [a vote on this bill],” Rep. Davis said. “That’s why a bipartisan supermajority of the House is cosponsoring our bill. Let’s get this done.”

“The 117th Congress can finally be the one that fixes this long-standing inequity and protect the benefits of retirees who dedicated their careers to public service,” Rep. Spanberger said.

On Sept. 19, NALC, along with other postal unions, sent a letter to the House Committee on Ways and Means urging the passage of H.R. 82 without amendment.

“After 30 years of inaction in Congress, it is time to repeal these unfair penalties that reduce retirees’ incomes by thousands of dollars every year, taking away the benefits that they earned in private sector employment.” Read the full letter [here](#).

The legislation now awaits a score from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) before it can be scheduled for a floor vote. With the congressional calendar coming to a close, it is imperative that letter carriers take action to tell their member of Congress in the House to bring this bill to the floor right away.

[Click here](#) to contact your representative.

## House passes bill protecting federal whistleblowers

Sep 15, 2022

Today, in a 221-203 vote, the House of Representatives passed the Whistleblower Protection Improvement Act of 2021 ([H.R. 2988](#)). The bill, introduced by Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), would enhance whistleblower protections for federal employees, including Postal Service employees.

The legislation would solidify that no federal employee could inhibit another federal employee from sharing information with Congress. It would prohibit the launch of retaliatory investigations against any whistleblower and prohibit retaliation against employees for disclosing violations to supervisors, which include violations of the law, gross mismanagement or waste, abuse of authority, or substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.

Additionally, the bill would streamline whistleblower procedures and ensure access to a timely, judicial review. Whistleblowers would be granted access to a jury trial in federal district court if the Merit Systems Protections Board does not issue a decision in 180 days, or 240 days if the board requests an extension. It would also clarify that prevailing whistleblowers are entitled to reimbursements for attorney fees and other necessary relief.

With only a few months left in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, it is unclear if the Senate will consider the bill. NALC will update letter carriers on any developments.

## House passes five bills supporting veterans

Sep 15, 2022

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives voted 397-29 to suspend the rules to pass several bills, including five bills that support veterans. Read more about these bills below.

### **Student Veteran Emergency Relief Act of 2022 (H.R. 7939)**

This bill, introduced by Reps. Mike Levin (D-CA) and Nancy Mace (R-SC), would codify many Covid-related education provisions to ensure student veterans are not negatively affected by any necessary periods of remote learning. It would also expand the veteran readiness and employment program, providing more veterans access to self-employment training. Additionally, it would allow the VA to extend GI Bill flexibilities during any future emergency declared by the president.

### **Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2022 (H.R. 7846)**

H.R. 7846 would require the VA to increase compensation rates for disabled veterans and dependency and indemnity compensation rates for surviving spouses and children. The rates would be increased at the same percentage as the cost-of-living increase in benefits for Social Security recipients that is effective on Dec. 1, 2022. The bill was introduced by Reps. Elaine Luria (D-VA) and Troy Nehls (R-TX).

### **Improving Access to the VA Home Loan Benefit Act of 2022 (H.R. 7735)**

This bill, introduced by Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL), would require the VA to update regulations, requirements and guidance related to appraisals for housing loans guaranteed by the VA. It would specify when an appraisal is required, how an appraisal is to be conducted, and who is eligible to conduct an appraisal for VA loans to help streamline the homebuying process for veterans.

### **Wounded Warriors Access Act (H.R. 5916)**

Reps. Pete Aguilar (D-CA) and Chip Roy (R-TX) introduced this bill that would allow veterans to access their C-Files, which include service records, VA exam results, and more, through an online portal and receive a digital copy of their files. The VA would be required to fulfill all requests within 120 days, streamlining the process and allowing veterans to receive their benefits faster.

### **Faster Payments to Veterans' Survivors Act of 2022 (H.R. 8260)**

H.R. 8260 would shorten the time that the VA is authorized to designate, contact and pay primary or alternate insurance beneficiaries from two years to one year and from four years to two years, respectively. It would ensure that procedures for paying alternate beneficiaries are consistently applied between VA life insurance programs and require the VA to better publicize online tools that allow veteran families to search for payments they may be entitled to. This bill was introduced by Reps. Chris Pappas (D-NH) and Nancy Mace (R-SC). The bills now need to be considered by the Senate. With only a few months left in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, it is unclear if they will receive consideration in the time remaining. NALC will update letter carriers on any future action.



## **NALC Priority Congressional Bills and Resolutions**

Below are bills of note for NALC that have been introduced in the 117th Congress. This page will be updated regularly as bills are introduced.

### **Passed**

## The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022

**Public Law No: 117-108**, signed by President Biden on April 6, 2022

*Passed in the House with a 342 - 92 vote, passed in the Senate with a 79 - 19 vote*

## House bills

### **Social Security Fairness Act - [H.R. 82](#)**

*Status: Introduced January 4, 2021*

***Co-sponsors:*** 296 (208 Democrats – 88 Republicans)

To repeal provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government.

[NALC fact sheet](#)

### **Federal Retirement Fairness Act - [H.R. 4268](#)**

*Status: Introduced June 30, 2021*

***Co-sponsors:*** 81 (63 Democrats – 18 Republicans)

To amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that civilian service in a temporary position after December 31, 1988, may be creditable service under the Federal Employees Retirement System, and for other purposes.

[NALC fact sheet](#)

## House resolutions

### **House Resolution 109 ([H. Res. 109](#)) – Door Delivery**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Stephanie Murphy (D-FL) and David Joyce (R-OH)*

***Co-sponsors:*** 158 (127 Democrats – 31 Republicans)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of door delivery for all business and residential customers.

[NALC fact sheet](#)

### **House Resolution 47 ([H. Res. 47](#)) – Anti-privatization**

*Status: Introduced by Reps. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) and Rodney Davis (R-IL)*

***Co-sponsors:*** 194 (168 Democrats – 26 Republicans)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the United States Postal Service remains an independent establishment of the Federal Government and is not subject to privatization.

[NALC fact sheet](#)

### **House Resolution 119 ([H. Res. 119](#)) - Service Standards**

*Status: Introduced by Rep. David McKinley (R-WV)*

***Co-sponsors:*** 139 (118 Democrats – 21 Republicans)

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service should take all appropriate measures to restore service standards in effect as of July 1, 2012.

## Senate bills

**Social Security Fairness Act - [S. 1302](#)**

*Status: Introduced April 22, 2021*

*Co-sponsors: 40 (34 Democrats – 4 Republicans – 2 Independents)*

To repeal provisions that reduce Social Security benefits for individuals who receive other benefits, such as a pension from a state or local government.

[NALC fact sheet](#)