

U.S. Representatives Allen and Michaud Welcome Committee Hearing Tomorrow on GPO/WEP

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Washington, DC -- U.S. Representatives Tom Allen and Mike Michaud today welcomed the decision by the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee to hold a hearing tomorrow on the government pension offset (GPO), enacted in 1977, and the windfall elimination provision (WEP), enacted in 1983.

Provisions cost thousands of Maine teachers and other government employees part of their retirement income

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representatives Tom Allen and Mike Michaud today welcomed the decision by the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee to hold a hearing tomorrow on the government pension offset (GPO), enacted in 1977, and the windfall elimination provision (WEP), enacted in 1983. Representatives Allen and Michaud had requested this hearing in a May 30, 2007 letter to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of both the full committee and the subcommittee. Representative Allen and Michaud are among 336 House sponsors of H.R. 82, The Social Security Fairness Act, legislation to repeal both the GPO and WEP.

"We applaud the committee's decision to hold this hearing and look forward to testimony from people who have lost retirement benefits due to these provisions," Representatives Allen and Michaud said. "Because of the GPO and WEP, hundreds of thousands of government retirees in Maine and 14 other states have lost billions of dollars in Social Security benefits. In Maine alone, Social Security does not cover more than half of our state and local government employees, subjecting them to the unexpected hardship of a painful reduction in their retirement income for which they may be unprepared."

The GPO often substantially reduces or eliminates the spousal benefit of those eligible for a federal, state, or local government pension not covered by Social Security and disproportionately affects women. The WEP often causes government retirees, especially lower paid workers with a non-covered government pension, to discover, upon retirement, an unanticipated reduction in their Social Security benefits by up to 50 percent.