



TRTA Continuing to Work for *YOU*. Keep Your Fingers Crossed.

- ***TRTA secured \$1.9 billion in benefits for Texas retirees after the repeal of WEP and GPO.***
- ***Challenges remain: spousal benefit rebate errors, Medicare reimbursements, and looming tax issues.***
- ***Congressman Gooden has been a key TRTA ally, connecting us directly to SSA leadership.***
- ***SSA has responded with professional, productive meetings.***
- ***TRTA continues pressing for fair implementation and urges members to stay engaged.***

Tim Lee, Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA) Executive Director, returned to Washington in early September to continue its fight for retirees following the historic repeal of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO).

That repeal—driven by TRTA members—ended four decades of unfair penalties on retired public workers and delivered more than \$1.9 billion in retroactive Social Security payments to Texas educators.

But challenges remain. When the Social Security Administration (SSA) determined rate eligibility for recipients, it used the date forms were filed rather than the date of life events, such as the passing of a spouse, which led to some retirees reporting that they had been shortchanged. For years, SSA staff even advised widows and widowers not to apply for spousal benefits, guidance that now may be costing retirees six months or more of lost payments. TRTA has been reporting on this issue since March and continues to bring it to the attention of both SSA and Congress.

TRTA members have also raised concerns about Medicare premium reimbursements and the tax implications many will face when filing in 2025 due to retroactive payments. TRTA is working on ideas with Congress and SSA that may help on these and other matters. In the meantime, TRTA encourages anyone who received a retroactive rebate thanks to the repeal of the WEP and GPO to keep records of their previous Medicare premium payments, as well as talk to a tax expert or trusted financial planner about tax concerns.

One of TRTA's strongest allies in this effort is Congressman Lance Gooden (R-Terrell). Gooden has consistently stood with TRTA, connecting its leadership with top SSA officials and making sure retirees' concerns are heard.

"The repeal of WEP and GPO was long overdue, but the way implementation is unfolding is deeply concerning," Gooden said. "I will keep working alongside TRTA and Tim Lee until these issues are resolved."

Director Lee praised both Gooden's support and SSA's professionalism in recent meetings: *"Congressman Gooden never turns us away. Thanks to him, we were able to meet directly with SSA leaders most involved in these issues. Our discussions were professional, respectful, and productive. I am encouraged that SSA leadership is listening and open to finding solutions."*

"TRTA will not stop until retirees receive the full benefits they have earned. We will continue advancing member concerns on Capitol Hill." said Lee.