



NEOEA - Retired

Volume 25, Number 2

January 2025

A publication of the North Eastern Ohio Education Association

<https://neoea-r.oea.us>

<https://www.neoea.org>

6001 Landerhaven Drive, Suite D,
Mayfield Heights, Ohio 44124-4190

■ 216-518-0200

■ retired @ neoea.org

NEOEA-R Organizing Committee

Nancy Wonson, Lakewood TA-R;
Chairperson

Dennis Lewis, Parma EA-R; Vice Chair
Sherri Koncilija, Painesville City TA-R;
Secretary

Gary Hollow, Bristol-R; Past Chair

Donna Smoot-Walters, Barberton EA-R;
NEOEA Liaison & OEA-R NEOEA
Representative

Debbie Bernauer, Brecksville-Broadview
EA-R

Beryl Burkle, Bedford EA-R

Karen Carney, Campbell EA-R

Dave Ciborek, Twinsburg EA-R

Nanci DiBianca, Cuyahoga Hts AOT-R

Martha Dunford, Perry EA-R

Sue Fatica, Painesville City TA-R

Marti Franks, Twinsburg EA-R

Patricia Frost-Brooks, East Cleveland EA-R

Peg Ham, Lorain EA-R

Hank Haynes, ACCESS-R

Becky Higgins, Copley TA-R

Teri Mackey, Wadsworth EA-R

Adele Matias, Mayfield EA-R

Steven Mitchell, East Cleveland EA-R

Tom Moscovic, Willoughby-Eastlake TA-R

Pat Wagar, Mayfield EA-R

Valenta Ward-Gravelly

Jene Wilson, ACCESS-R

Landmark Victory! GPO and WEP Repealed



A win forty years in the making, NEA secures full retirement benefits for educators.

A bill to repeal the decades-long Social Security penalty on teachers, police and other government retirees won final passage on the night of Friday, December 20 after the Senate voted overwhelmingly to grant nearly 3 million Americans their full benefits. President Biden's signed the repeal into law on Sunday, January 5, 2025.

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

The bill eliminates the Government Pension Offset, which in various instances reduces Social Security benefits for spouses, widows, and widowers who also receive government pensions of their own.

The bill also eliminates the Windfall Elimination Provision, which in some instances reduces Social Security benefits for individuals who also receive a pension or disability benefit from an employer that did not withhold Social Security taxes.

"Ohio's public school educators dedicate their lives and careers to serving our students and creating a brighter future for everyone. But, for educators who came into the profession after working in the private sector, or for survivors depending on the hard-earned benefits earned by their spouses, GPO/WEP made it so they could not receive most of the Social Security benefits they had earned through years of paying into the Social Security system. That is unfair, and it is wrong. But now, our federal lawmakers have stood together to make things right," said Ohio Education Association (OEA) President Scott DiMauro who attended the ceremony when President Biden signed the legislation into law.

"On behalf of Ohio's public school educators – past, present, and future – the Ohio Education Association is sincerely grateful to all 15 members of the US House and both Vice President-Elect J.D. Vance and Senator Sherrod Brown, who voted to repeal the punitive, outdated federal laws," DiMauro said. "OEA is especially grateful to Sen. Brown for his unwavering determination to get his Social Security Fairness Act across the finish line so Ohio's educators and other public servants can retire with dignity after decades of service in our state."

Ohio is one of about a dozen states where GPO/WEP has prevented public servants from receiving all of the Social Security benefits they've earned. Nearly 250,000 Ohioans will be affected by the repeal of those unfair laws.

"For too long, the federal government has failed to provide the full Social Security benefits many public school educators earned. For too long, potentially great educators have chosen not to enter this profession because they would lose much of the Social Security benefits they had previously earned if they entered a life of public service. That changes now," DiMauro said.

These changes are effective for benefits payable after December 2023.

More than 2.5 million Americans will receive a lump-sum payment of thousands of dollars to make up for the shortfall in benefits they should have received in 2024, Biden said at the signing.



Eliminating the WEP will increase monthly Social Security benefits for 2.1 million beneficiaries by \$360, on average, as of December 2025, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated.

Eliminating the GPO will increase monthly benefits by an average of \$700 for 380,000 spouses and by an average of \$1,190 for 390,000 surviving spouses as of December 2025, according to CBO.

FAQ: Social Security Fairness Act

The Social Security Administration is evaluating how to implement the SSFA, and will provide more information and guidance as soon as possible.

The initial FAQs are based on available information. Stay tuned for updates from [NEA](#) and on the [Social Security Administration website](#).

<https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/landmark-victory-gpo-and-wep-repealed>
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/82>

<https://apnews.com/article/social-security-congress-565aaf221de6d607f207e286655eef25>
<https://www.ohea.org/ohea-celebrates-passage-of-social-security-fairness-act/>

https://www.cnbc.com/2025/01/06/social-security-fairness-act-brings-retirement-changes-for-some-pensioners.html?_source=androidappshare

MegaConference is Saturday, March 8, 2025



The name says it all—**Megaconference**—NEOEA invites you to our Megaconference, presented by NEOEA's Environmental Concerns, ESP Organizing, Leadership Development, Legislative, Minority Organizing, **NEOEA-R Organizing**, Personal Welfare and Financial Planning, Public Relations, Professional Development, and Social and Human Concerns Committees.

The 2025 Megaconference will be presented at Corporate College East, located in Warrensville Heights at 4400 Richmond Road. Registration and refreshments begin at 8:30 a.m., and workshops begin at 9:00. The \$25 registration fee covers all sessions, continental breakfast, and lunch.

With twelve simultaneous breakouts in three one-hour time slots, there's something for everyone! Our **NEOEA-R Organizing Committee** is sponsoring **Program 9D Protect Yourself Online** (without Deleting Everything!), **11 C Who Continues to Undermine Public Education?** and a **Pre-**

Retired Workshop where members working at schools are informed of what to expect at retirement. For the latest information about Megaconference, go to <https://neoea.org/files/Mega.pdf>

GETTING TO KNOW SERS
 A retirement system for public employees in the state of Ohio.

Join us for an online presentation on Zoom to learn more about how SERS works for you to help you prepare for retirement. **All OEA members are welcomed to attend.**

Speaker: Cameron Vaughn, Member Education Coordinator School Employees Retirement Systems (SERS) of Ohio

Date: Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Time: 5:00 pm

Where: Online, you can join on your phone or own your computer. To Register visit <https://tinyurl.com/ym8a3at6>

OEA Fall Representative Assembly Report



Fall 2024
 Representative
 Assembly

Submitted by Jene' Wilson, NEOEA-R Delegate

The OEA Representative Assembly was held Saturday, December 7th, with a full agenda of speakers, business items, and awards. President Scott DiMauro reported that the recent statewide elections could affect school funding, staffing shortages, student mental health supports, and curriculum. OEA will monitor all of this, as usual.

NEA President Becky Pringle emphasized public education as a common good and that as public educators, we should be dedicated to promoting, protecting, and expanding it. Patricia Collins, Executive Director, gave an emotional farewell speech on her retirement.

Vice-President Jeff Wensing reported on legislation being watched by OEA and encouraged members to read and respond to the Legislative Watch when it comes in your email. The assembled delegates accepted the Legislative report as written.

Treasurer Rob McFee reported that membership revenue has held steady while investment reserves were better than expected. The average teacher salary increased by 3.1%, for fiscal year 24-25, which resulted in a \$17 increase in dues for a full-time educator. Other membership categories' dues are based off this number.

A video highlighting the Ohio Association of Special Needs Professionals (OASNP), a department of OEA, was shown. The OEA Fund for Children and Public Education Award was given to several members for achieving certain levels of giving to the fund.

2025 Delegate Elections – OEA-R Advisory and NEA Representative Assembly



You have an opportunity to have your voice heard on the state and national level. The Ohio Education Association will conduct elections early in 2025 to elect representatives to the OEA Retired Advisory Council and Retired Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly.

The Following Positions where NEOEA-R members can be elected: OEA Board of Directors—OEA-Retired Advisory Council Representative, NEOEA – OEA-Retired Advisory Council Representative and Retired Delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly.

For more information on the NEA RA, visit the NEA website: <https://ra.nea.org/about/ra-101/>

Declaration of Candidacy Forms must be filed by February 10, 2025

OEA-Retired Advisory
NEA Retired Delegate

Contact William Baird at OEA (800) 282-1500 or (614) 227-3169 for more information.

OEA-R Webinar Schedule



<https://oea-r.ohea.us/events-programs/webinars/>

February 26, 2025—Kickoff for **Read Across America**

March 30, 2025—Overcoming Barriers Among Immigrants by Empowering Adults with Literacy

May 28, 2025—Listening to Building Understanding

Certain webinars may be viewed at the link above.

STRS Board Elections



OEA will screen candidates for the STRS Board, both active and retired, in late January. Watch your e-mail and vote for the OEA Endorsed candidates when your ballot arrives in April.

OEA-Retired Racial and Social Justice Committee Book Study



For exciting discussions, all OEA members are invited to join us on this journey. We aim to inspire engaging conversations in books that relate to everyday experiences on the topics of racial and social justice. This will help us learn from each other and grow in understanding.

All sessions are virtual on Zoom and will take place the third Monday of each month from 7pm-8pm (unless otherwise stated).

Please contact Makia Burns, OEA-Retired Liaison, burnsm@ohea.org with questions.

Book Reading Schedule:

- Dec 16 & Jan 27 – One of Our Kind by Nicola Yoon
- Feb 24 & Mar 17 – How the Word is Passed by Clint Smith
- Apr 28 & May 19 – The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander
- Jun 16 & Jul 21 – Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- Aug 18 & Sep 15 – Frederick Douglass by David Blight
- Oct 20 & Nov 17 – Four Hundred Souls by Ibram X. Kendi

Program Flyer

[Please click here to register](#)

Tips for AVOIDING SCAMS in the New Year!



- Never send money to someone you have never met face-to-face
- Don't click on links or open attachments in unsolicited email or text messages.
- Don't believe everything you see or read.
- Take precautions when making online purchases.
- Be extremely cautious when dealing with anyone you've met online.
- Never share personally identifiable information with someone who has contacted you unsolicited.
- Don't be pressured to act immediately.
- Use secure, traceable transactions when making payments for goods, services, taxes, and debts. Gift cards can't be traced!
- Whenever possible, work with businesses that have proper identification, licensing, and insurance.
- Be cautious about what **YOU SHARE** on Social Media. (Learn more at [BBB.org/AvoidScams](https://www.bbb.org/avoidscams).)

NEOEA Discounts at Playhouse Square



NEOEA members have discounts for highly-anticipated shows in the KeyBank Broadway Series.

- ◆ Jan 7 - 26, 2025 | Connor Palace Life of Pi
- ◆ Feb 4 - 23, 2025 | Connor Palace Parade
- ◆ Mar 4 - 23, 2025 | Connor Palace Romeo & Juliet
- ◆ Apr 9 - 13, 2025 | Connor Palace Peter Pan
- ◆ Apr 22 - May 11, 2025 | Connor Palace Shucked
- ◆ June 17 - July 6, 2025 | KeyBank State Theatre Hamilton
- ◆ July 15 - Aug 3, 2025 | Connor Palace Kimberly Akimbo

Use promo code listed in the Playhouse Square area of Announcements at neoea.org, accessible after logging in, and save up to 65% off select performances and seating locations with reduced handling fees! GET TICKETS: <https://tickets.playhousesquare.org/g04/Online/default.asp>

NEA & OEA Discounts



<https://www.ohea.org/member-center/member-benefits/>

- ◆ **NEA Member Benefits:** For questions call 1.800.637.4636 (toll free); <https://www.neamb.com/>
- ◆ **NEA Student Debt Navigator:** <https://www.neamb.com/products/nea-student-debt-navigator>
- ◆ **NEA Travel Dollars**—Enroll in NEA Travel and receive \$500 Travel Dollars to use like cash when you book a vacation. <https://www.neamb.com/products/nea-travel-dollars>
- ◆ **NEA Discount Marketplace:** <https://www.neamb.com/products/nea-discount-marketplace>
- ◆ **OEA ACCESS:** <https://ohea.accessdevelopment.com/>
- ◆ **OEA/NEA Attorney Referral and Discount Information:** <https://neoea.org/files/ARP.pdf>
- ◆ **NEOEA Member Benefits:** <https://neoea.org/Education-Union/Member-Benefits>
- ◆ **Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse:** <https://www.rocketmortgagefieldhouse.com/group/detail/fieldhouseplus> Code: OEA22

NEOEA Discounts

Visit <https://neoea.org/Education-Union/Member-Benefits>

- ◆ **Bedrooms Today:** <https://neoea.org/MemberData/2019-01-BedroomsToday.pdf>
- ◆ **Best Benefits Club:** <https://bestbenefitsclub.com/>

- ◆ **Bright Now! Dental:** <https://www.brightnow.com/https://neoea.org/files/BrightNowFlyer.pdf>
- ◆ **Ohio Educational Credit Union:** <https://neoea.org/MemberData/ohecu-loan.pdf>
- ◆ **Park Place:** Discount airport parking: <https://neoea.org/MemberData/ParkPlace.pdf>
- ◆ **Great Lakes Science Center:** <https://greatscience.com/educators>

NEOEA-R Calendar

<http://neoea-r.ohea.us/calendar/>



- Tue, Feb 4** NEOEA-R Organizing Committee
- Sat, Mar 8** MegaConference
- Tue, Apr 15** NEOEA-R Spring Conference
- Tue, Apr 15** NEOEA-R Organizing Committee
- Tue, Apr 22** OEA-R Spring Conference

NEOEA-R is working to host several additional activities in the coming months. Watch your e-mail or our [website](#) for details. Tentative activities might include museum visits, wine tasting and river and lake cruises.

NEOEA Calendar

<https://neoea.org/Education-Union/NEOEA-Calendar>

OEA Information Update



Reminder: should you change your address, phone, or email address, please let the Membership Department at OEA know.

<https://www.ohea.org/member-center/member-update-form/>

Additional membership questions? membership@ohea.org or InfoOEA at 1-844-632-4636.

By doing this, it allows OEA-R Advisory Council District Reps to be able to let you know of upcoming events in your District. It also gives the Advisory Council the ability to send you important details via email. If you know of friends that are active members that are retiring this year, please inform Lisa Marshall-Scott at lisascott4850@gmail.com.

Join OEA-R / NEA-R

Life Membership information and forms are available at:

<https://oea-r.ohea.us/join/how-to-join/>

Join Online: <https://www.mynea360.org/s/join-now>