



HIGHWAY PATROL RETIREMENT SYSTEM

January 2025 Newsletter

Contact Us: 614.431.0781



"Our History Is Our Pride"

Tax Documents Mailed to All Benefit Recipients



The IRS 1099-R Form for 2024 was mailed to all benefit recipients on January 14, 2025. This document is also available to be printed from our website after logging in to the secure member area. As a reminder, tax withholdings can be changed by logging in to the member area of the website.



The Social Security Fairness Act of 2023

On January 5, 2025, the Social Security Fairness Act of 2023 (the "Act") was signed into law, eliminating the penalty that reduced the Social Security benefits of public sector retirees, spouses, and surviving spouses. The Act amends Social Security by repealing two provisions: the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). The WEP reduced Social Security benefits of retired or disabled employees who 1) received a pension from a state or local government, and 2) had fewer than 30 years of employment outside of the Public Sector.

Social Security benefits are calculated by multiplying a person's lifetime average indexed monthly earnings by three different percentages and then adding the results to determine the monthly benefit. The WEP reduced the first percentage from 90% to 40%. The GPO functioned similarly, except that it reduced the Social Security benefits available to spouses (generally 50% of the Social Security benefit) or surviving spouses (100% of the Social Security Benefit) by two-thirds of their monthly Public Sector pension benefit, which often eliminated the Social Security benefit entirely.

Repealing these Social Security reductions will have a significant impact on nearly 2/3 of HPRS retirees and surviving spouses. Repeal of the WEP will result in an average monthly Social Security increase of \$360 dollars, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The CBO also estimates significant increases in Social Security benefits to spouses (\$700 per month) and surviving spouses (\$1,190 per month), on average.

At this time, you do not need to take any action except to verify your current mailing address and direct deposit information. Most people can do this online with their personal my Social Security account without calling or visiting Social Security. Visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount to sign in or create your account. This repeal is effective retroactively to December 31, 2023, meaning that affected Public Sector pensioners will receive retroactive benefits to account for the reductions applied in 2024. The SSA has not announced when the provisions of the Act will be implemented; however, in developing its estimates, the CBO assumed that the majority of the increases and retroactive payments would occur sometime in 2025.

You can also check the SSA's website for updates at <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html>.

IMPORTANT
information

Message From the Executive Director

Importance of Accumulating 40 Social Security Credits

To be best prepared for retirement, HPRS members should ensure they have accumulated 40 Social Security credits or have a plan in place to accumulate them. Social Security credits are a measure used by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to determine an individual's eligibility for benefits. In 2025, you earn one credit for every \$1,640 of earnings, up to a maximum of four credits per year. This means that to earn the full four credits for the year, you need to have at least \$6,560 in covered earnings. Understanding the process and requirements to qualify for these benefits is crucial.

Social Security benefits can provide an important portion of retirement income, which is especially helpful as our members are living longer. Having access to Social Security benefits can help cover living expenses and provide greater financial stability in your retirement years. To qualify for Social Security retirement benefits, you need at least 40 credits, which is equivalent to roughly 10 years of work. Without these 40 credits, you won't be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits, regardless of your age or other factors.

The three-legged stool, a popular metaphor in financial planning, is a part of every HPRS retirement benefits presentation, and has been for many years. It represents the three main sources of income that provide for the most stable retirement plan: HPRS pension, personal savings, and Social Security. The idea behind the three-legged stool is that each leg supports the overall stability of retirement income. If one leg is weak or missing, the stool is not as stable.

Now that the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) have been repealed, accumulating 40 Social Security credits is more beneficial than ever. The change will result in a larger Social Security pension, and less penalty to the benefits of a surviving spouse. By securing an additional leg to the stool of your retirement plan, it adds benefits that can increase your quality of life during retirement.



HPRS Board/Staff Member: **Spotlight of the Month**

Elected Employee Member Representative **Sergeant Brice Nihiser**

Sergeant Brice Nihiser was first elected to the Highway Patrol Retirement System Board in 2018. Since then, he has become an asset representing our men and women who wear the uniform. First being elected to fill an unexpired term, and then winning his last election, Brice has demonstrated concern and compassion for both the active and retired members in his position as trustee. He specifically

has taken a special interest in investments and macroeconomics.

Brice graduated from the 158th Academy class in 2015 and has spent nearly a decade serving the men and women of Districts 7 and 9. Currently, he is a sergeant at the Athens Post and has also served as the Public Information Officer for these districts. His specialized training includes FBI-LEEDA Media and Public Relations, as well as Drug Recognition Expert Training and Certifications.

Brice holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Freshwater and Marine Biology from Ohio University and a Master of Science degree in Environmental Studies from the OU Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs.

Residing in Rockbridge with his wife Jenny and their two children, Graham and Ruth, Brice enjoys spending his free time outdoors. He is also an avid macro photographer, capturing the beauty of insects, spiders, plants, and fungi.

HPRS Pension Payment Dates

Most months result in a pension payment on the 20th of the month. However, when the 20th falls on a weekend or holiday, the pension payment will occur the next business day. This will occur five times in 2025, on the following dates: January 21st, April 21st, July 21st, September 22nd, and December 22nd.





Job Opportunities for Retirees

As a reminder, job opportunities are listed in the secure area of our website (www.ohprs.org). Please check this periodically to ensure you are aware of any new postings.

February 2025 HPRS Meetings

On Wednesday, February 19, 2025, committee meetings will start at 1300 hours, starting with the Administration Committee, followed by the Health Care Funding Committee, and the Special Committee on COLA.

On Thursday, February 20, 2025, beginning at 0900 hours, the Audit Committee will meet, followed by the Investment Committee at 0930 hours, and then the Board meeting at 1200 hours.

Some committee meetings may be canceled from time to time. Please refer to the HPRS website at www.ohprs.org for the most current meeting dates and times.

Save the Date!

- 2025 Snowbird Reunion, February 28 - March 2, 2025 - Lake Mary, Florida

Please visit our website for more details and for RSVP information, <https://www.ohprs.org/ohprs/RetireeEventsCalendar.jsp>.



Our office will be closed:

~ Monday, February 17th - Presidents' day

Retiree Qualification

The Academy Range will be hosting annual retiree qualifications in 2025. As a reminder, your qualification under the LEOSA rules is only good for one year from the date of qualification. This can be found in 18 USC 926C: Carrying of concealed firearms by qualified retired law enforcement officers. For example, if you qualified on May 1, 2024, then you must qualify on or prior to May 1, 2025.

Upcoming scheduled retiree qualifications at the Academy for 2025 are:

- Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 1300 hours
- Friday, June 6, 2025, from 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. (Annual Retiree Cookout)
- Wednesday, August 6, 2025, at 1300 hours
- Wednesday, October 8, 2025, at 1300 hours



Additionally, all retirees may also reach out to their local District Headquarters for local weapons qualification availability.

You must complete a Weapons Qualifications Record (HP-15C), that includes your personal weapon information, and submit to Melissa Fellure at mjfellure@dps.ohio.gov no less than 14 days prior to the qualification date. Retirees must bring their Division-issued ID Card with them to the qualification, and the retiree must supply weapon(s) and ammunition. If you have any questions, please contact Lieutenant Brian Nelson of the Academy Range at bwnelson@dps.ohio.gov or 614.644.4325.

Important Numbers For You To Have On Hand

HPRS - 614.431.0781	Aetna Vision - 877.973.3238
Via Benefits (Medicare) - 833.431.1358	Delta Dental of Ohio - 800.524.0149
Via Benefits (Pre-Medicare) - 800.667.2184	Social Security - 800.772.1213
Medicare - 800.633.4227	Ohio Def. Comp. - 877.644.6457

HPRS Staff Email Directory

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