



ASMC Gulf Coast Chapter Newsletter

Nov
2023

**ASMC Gulf Coast
Chapter**

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www.asmcconline.org



Ms. Mika Gellinger

President's Corner

Written by Ms. Mika Gellinger, Hurlburt Vice President

ASMC members,

I am so excited for the next few months as we approach the holiday season. We recently had the Octoberfest (a huge success) and I'm looking forward to the next luncheon and finally the December annual holiday party to wrap up calendar year 2023. Be mindful of those that are going through a rough time and reach out and be there for one another (not just the holidays but anytime, anywhere).

I am the Hurlburt Field VP, and I transferred my membership in 2012 when I arrived at Eglin as the 96 Mission Support Group Resource Manager. Lucky for me one of the membership committee chairs (Kim Sypher) was in 96 CPTS so she immediately transferred me to the Gulf Coast Chapter.

I started out as a Non-Appropriated Fund (NAF) employee general ledger technician at Kadena AB, Okinawa, Japan (my birthplace). After Kadena AB, we landed at F. E. Warren AFB, WY and I continued as a NAF employee until I crossed over to an Appropriated Fund position as a general ledger technician for the Services Squadron (Today's Force Support Squadron). I was with the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center Detachment 3 for nearly 2 years at Hurlburt Field before transferring to AFSOC. Currently I am a budget analyst in AFSOC/FMAI (Budget Integration Branch).

I waited a few years before getting active in the Gulf Coast Chapter and the excuse I used was that I was finishing up my formal education and didn't have time for any extracurricular activities. Looking back, my only regret is not getting involved sooner because I've met so many people within this chapter and had fun at various events. I met Ken Pickler (now part of the retiree committee) at an ASMC sponsored training event and he graciously offered to be my mentor. I met Michelle Woolgar (53 WG/FM) when I joined the RPDI committee she was chairing. Ms. Woolgar encouraged me to chair the Ways and Means committee. I met Dr. Jennifer Miller in the RPDI committee, and she co-chaired the Ways and Means with me until she departed Eglin AFB for another position.

President's Message Continued Next Page...

President's Corner continued...

Although Ways and Means was challenging, I've had great memories from all the fundraiser events. I met Kaci Harris when she spearheaded the 5K Fun Run/Walk. I could always count on the triple towers and 96 CPTS whenever we hosted food fundraisers (Domino's Pizza or Chick-Fil-A). During the BX gift wrapping fundraiser, I knew the 96 TW ladies (Ivonne, Espie, Serena, Theresa, and Gretchen) would volunteer for the same shift and they were great gift wrappers. Brianna Hoppel helped me with a golf course tournament, and she is always there for me. I met Mandy Chapman (treasurer then) because I was depositing fundraiser money to her regularly. Mandy is now our newsletter author/publisher and upset I am late with my submission. 😊 I can always rely on Amy Tolar for fundraiser ideas/advice and even co-chairing the RPDI last year. At last year's Holiday Cookie Party, Ms. Judy Davis shared her invaluable interview preparation tips. I fondly recall driving back to Hurlburt Field with a big smile on my face and thinking how glad I attended the party, and it was well worth the drive from Hurlburt Field. There are so many more people I can mention, but you get the point.

Like the president and other vice presidents' sentiments, our goal this year is to revitalize our chapter and regain our five-star status. We need everyone's support and assistance. Please get involved in the various committees and/or attend luncheons and other events. The networking opportunities are endless and priceless. I still reach out to Eglin personnel for assistance, and they always come through for me. Please encourage people to join the chapter. It's never too late to join a committee and get involved and we look forward to meeting everyone. Take care.



Retiree Update

Our retiree mentor corps is now set for our upcoming launch. Luvenia Shuman and Karen Williams have joined ranks with Cleo Battle, Dennis Harland, James Pitts, Denise Wagner and me to serve as mentors.

Watch for chapter e-mails containing detailed information regarding how to request a mentor, the mentor matching process, and the procedures we will use to help ensure a successful experience for everyone.



Program News



Oktoberfest was held at 1100 on 26 October at Post'l Point, Eglin AFB. Our members celebrated the successful close out of FY23 with burgers, brats, dessert competition, and cornhole tournament. Thank you to everyone who helped plan, organize, and setup this event. None of it would have been possible without our volunteers' diligence and hard work. If you couldn't make it, look at the pictures below to see all the fun you missed! On behalf of the Gulf Coast Chapter, we hope you can make the next event. Don't forget the Christmas party is coming up in December and it is sure to be a blast!



Community News



Veterans Day Parade 2023

Sat, Nov 11 | Downtown Crestview

Care Packages

If you would like to donate to care packages that go to our deployed FM members, please contact Patrick DeWitt.

Thank you for being the reason someone smiled!

Bob Hope Village
92 Sunset Lane, Shalimar, FL 32579
Thanksgiving Day Meal Shifts
Volunteers Needed

Thu, Nov 23,
10AM-12:30PM OR
12PM-2:30PM



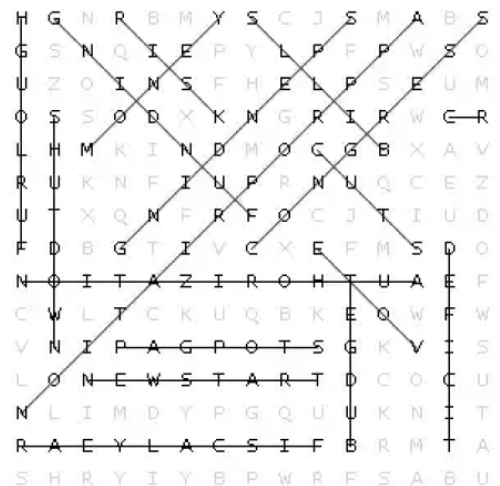
Volunteers to assist with set-up, serving, cleaning up after meal and socializing with residents.

<https://afev.volunteerhub.com/vv2/>



Answers to October's word search

Happy New Year



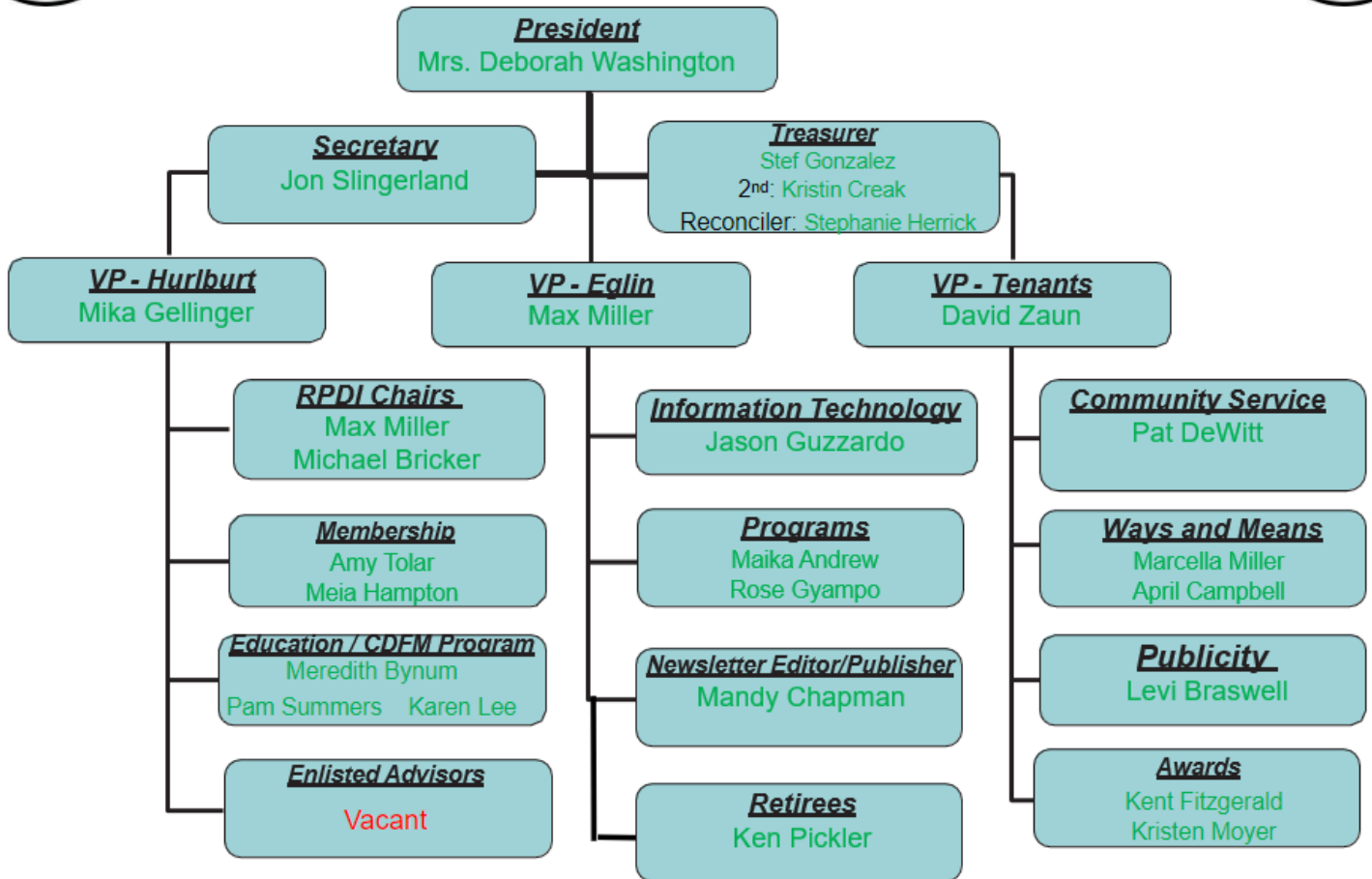
Christmas Market 2023

Sat, Nov 18 | Crestview Christmas Market

Org Chart



2023-2024 Gulf Coast Chapter



As of September 2023

Thankful and Blessed

R F Y R N D F M P K O T Y F C
B N A X H I H A C F C E K N G
L D D M C Z R I O L K A O U N
U O I I I A C O J R W I L N I
F Y R Y D L T P U D T A G B R
K A F E Z B Y T V A D D F K E
N O I T A I C E R P P A E R H
A Q W L C D L B P M E P A I T
H H L H I B E V M Q H Y S P A
T O A G B L L K L I W L T P G
Q L L O E G R A T I T U D E O
E I G C R U E A T I N G Y B M
S D N E I R F H N I K P M U P
Z A E A L C T E A F V U N U P
T Y L S H A B Z M M I U M M E

Directions:

Find the word in the puzzle.

Words can go in any direction.

Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

Appreciation
Black Friday
Celebration
Eating
Family
Feast

Football
Friends
Gathering
Gobble
Gratitude
Ham


Holiday
Parade
Pie
Pumpkin
Thankful
Turkey

Answers to word search will appear in the next newsletter

The Importance of Financial Management


Written by

Deborah Washington




The United States Air Force (USAF) plays a critical role in our nation's defense, and its financial management is pivotal to maintaining its readiness and capabilities. At the heart of this endeavor lies the connection between the Air Force's operations and the defense budget.

The defense budget, is responsible for allocating resources to the various branches of the military, including the Air Force. This allocation requires a finely tuned system of financial management to ensure that funds are utilized efficiently and effectively. With the Air Force's diverse missions, from aerial combat to space exploration and cyber warfare, managing the budget is an intricate task.




A substantial portion of the defense budget is allocated to readiness, which is the ability to rapidly respond to threats. It ensures that the Air Force is equipped, trained, and prepared for any situation. Funding for personnel, maintenance, and training is a vital aspect of financial management to maintain high levels of readiness.

The defense budget is also instrumental in modernizing the Air Force. Staying at the forefront of technological advancements is critical in an era where innovation is the key to maintaining an edge in national security. Investments in cutting-edge aircraft, precision guided weapons, cybersecurity, and space technologies are essential for the Air Force's effectiveness.



Despite the importance of financial management, challenges persist. The Air Force must contend with the ever-increasing costs of modernization, including research and development, procurement, and sustainment. Balancing these expenses is a constant struggle. The Air Force's financial managers must carefully prioritize and allocate funds to mitigate these challenges.

Financial management professionals play a vital role in ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used responsibly and effectively. Their expertise enables the Air Force to adapt to evolving security challenges while maintaining fiscal responsibility.



Financial management and the defense budget is dynamic and requires careful planning, allocation, and oversight to guarantee that the USAF remains at the forefront of global security. The men and women who serve in this capacity are unsung heroes, working diligently to balance the nation's security needs with financial prudence. Their efforts help guarantee that the USAF remains "Ready" in defense of our nation and its values.





Program/Speaker Lineup

Future Meetings

16 Nov 2023
“Jeopardy”
With Brianna
Hoppel
Time/Location
TBA

14 Dec 2023
“Christmas Party”
Time/Location TBA

Past Meeting

26 October 2023
“Oktoberfest”
Post'l Point

National ASMC Events



Fiscal Law

Nov 14 -16 8AM - 4PM ET Virtual
[<https://asmconline.org/event/fiscal-law-14-16-november-2023/>]

Program/ Budget Summit

January 18 12PM - 6PM ET Arlington, VA
[<https://asmconline.org/event/2024-program-budget-summit/>]

Fiscal Law

Jan 30 - Feb 1 8AM - 4PM ET Virtual
[<https://asmconline.org/event/fiscal-law-30-jan-1-feb-2024/>]

PDI 2024

May 29 - 31 Phoenix, AZ
[<https://asmconline.org/event/pdi-2024/>]



Want to learn more about the industry?
ASMC's Engage Online Community is ready and waiting for you to explore! Take a few minutes today to log in and look around - there are plenty of new and veteran members starting discussions, writing blogs and posting resources. You don't want to miss out.

<https://engage.asmconline.org/>

Join Today



ASMC is your trusted resource, committed to the professional development of our global network of defense financial managers.

Who Should Join?

Persons who are, or have been, employed within the defense FM field of the federal government or associated with it. The individual fee is \$50 for one year or \$120 for three years. Corporate Membership is available for private sector companies in defense financial management.



**Learn more at
asmconline.org**



Make an Immediate Impact on Your Career



**STAY CONNECTED
AND INFORMED**



**ADVANCE YOUR
FM KNOWLEDGE**



**BUILD YOUR
COMMUNITY**

“

I have been an ASMC member for a 'long time' and the Society was a principal mainstay in my DoD career and professional development, culminating as the Principal Deputy ASN/FM.

Charles E. Cook III, SES, Retired

”

Promoting thought leadership, professional development, and ethical behavior in all aspects of defense financial management (FM)



NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Expand your network with over 14,000+ ASMC members and 100+ chapters worldwide



CERTIFIED DEFENSE FINANCIAL MANAGER (CDFM) PROGRAM

ASMC offers the CDFM to those demonstrating proficiency in the core aspects of defense FM



CONTINUING EDUCATION

ASMC, with the assistance of the DoD, has created a variety of trainings to shape and drive the field

American Society of Military Comptrollers

Established in 1948, ASMC is the non-profit professional organization for persons, military and civilian, involved in the field of defense FM.

ASMC promotes the education and training of its members, and supports the development and advancement of the profession of military comptrollership.



Learn More
asmconline.org/join

Member News



Christmas Party



We need volunteers! Please consider volunteering to lead/organize the chapter holiday party! Please contact Maika Andrew (maika.andrew.1@us.af.mil) for more information.

RPDI News

The 2024 April RPDI is in the works. Max Miller and Michael Bricker are our new RPDI chairs. Thank you both for volunteering! We still need volunteers for the committee! Please contact Max Miller at max.miller.2@us.af.mil for more information.



Did you or someone you know recently move to another organization at Eglin? If so, you or someone you know might have dropped off the ASMC distro. Be sure to send an email to aac.asmcgulfcoast@us.af.mil so you don't miss any future communication and announcements.



New to the Eglin AFB FM team? Visit the link below to enroll to be an ASMC member. Select Gulf Coast Chapter or log into your account to transfer to our chapter.

Contact Amy Tolar, membership chair, for more information or to be added to the ASMC distro. <https://asmconline.org/membership/>

Christmas gift wrapping



Be on the lookout for Eglin ASMC emails with volunteer dates/times. Please make sure to volunteer through your Ways and Means Committee team. Proceeds from events like these allow us to provide scholarships to high school seniors and college students.

National ASMC News

ASMC Newsroom

THE BUSINESS OF DEFENSE

Where math, data and the PPBE meet: How one small business helps agencies get the most from their resources

October 13, 2023

The government shutdown is “a perfect example of where fragmented planning breaks down,” offered Dan Saaty. In a shutdown scenario, the federal spending plan literally falls off a cliff because far-flung priorities and needs immediately start to change if there’s not a continuing resolution.

The fretful scenario shows why agencies need to adopt a continuous planning framework that relies on automation to let the government keep adjusting its assumptions based on an everchanging set of facts and data, said the co-founder and chief strategy officer of Decision Lens.

Using such a framework, “I can build scenarios before the end of the fiscal year and then I can build scenarios after the end of the fiscal year that let me take into account what-ifs,” Saaty said during the American Society of Military Comptrollers’ ***The Business of Defense*** podcast on Federal News Network. “What if time changes? What if our budgets change? What if our priorities change? All of that can be done in a visual dynamic planning solution.”

Built on a family mathematical legacy

That need to be able to plan for what-ifs and make decisions in near real time informed by data, particularly within the Defense Department, is exactly why Saaty and his brother John founded Decision Lens in 2005.

The company focuses on what Saaty called the “messy side” of the planning and budgeting equation: gathering and making sense of data from disparate sources to let organizations collaboratively plan and then replan in near-real time to evaluate possible spending options.

“Decision Lens is really designed to help with the whole upfront part of the planning process — of capturing requirements, prioritizing and making resource allocation decisions,” he said.

Saaty recounted how he and his brother built the Decision Lens technology based on the analytic hierarchy process, a multicriteria decision-making theory developed by his mathematician father, Thomas Saaty.

“We took the mathematics that he had developed, and we developed and patented additional mathematics to help with the process of how you plan, prioritize and ultimately how you build resource allocation scenarios,” he said. “How do I allocate my budgets in a highly constrained fiscal environment?”

The approach relies on using algorithms and automation to connect the dots across data and to provide predictive analytics. In its earliest iteration, Decision Lens focused exclusively on the front end of the DoD Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) process.

Agencies today are beginning to see and embrace the value of such an approach, Saaty said. When the company started, most Defense planning processes were manual and spreadsheet-driven, he recalled.

“People couldn’t keep up with the data. They were presenting information to leaders that was no longer accurate or up to date,” Saaty said. “Leaders were making decisions. And then what would happen is they’d find out that all the data was wrong on which they’d made the decisions.”

Keeping people in the decision-making loop

ASMC CEO Rich Brady pointed out that data use within organizations seems to fall along a spectrum, from data-informed to data-driven. “I don’t know that Defense will ever get to the point where they’re data-driven, where they’re solely dependent on data to make decisions like high-frequency traders or something like that — but more on the data-informed side.”

Saaty said that’s OK and that there’s a misnomer in planning organizations that “data-driven” implies all they need is the data and then the decisions will just somehow happen.

National ASMC News

“Actually, data doesn’t make decisions, people do,” he said. “And people, to make decisions, need to have a way to exercise their judgment and put data in context. So you really can’t eliminate people from the decision-making process.”

As much as artificial intelligence and machine learning help Decision Lens develop tools that can make increasingly smarter recommendations based on an agency’s own data, people remain an essential ingredient — combining judgement with data, Saaty said.

“If you have people and you provide those people with the right information, they can now discern how that information feeds their process. And so part of our collaborative prioritization is the ability to bring in subjective judgment and combine it with quantitative predictive data to get a true picture of the impact of the decisions that you’re making.”

To listen to the full discussion between Dan Saaty, co-founder and chief strategy officer at Decision Lens, and Rich Brady, CEO of ASMC, navigate using the hyperlink below:

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/the-business-of-defense/2023/10/where-math-data-and-the-ppbe-meet-how-one-small-business-helps-agencies-get-the-most-from-their-resources/?readmore=1>

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Decision Lens founders, John and Dan Saaty

National News

Federal News Network

Pay & Benefits

Retirement changes for former seasonal feds, higher death benefits and other bills to watch

By Drew Friedman

October 23, 2023

Congress once again has its sights set on making changes to federal benefits in more ways than one.

Under one reintroduced bill, former temporary and seasonal federal employees would get a chance to make “catch-up” contributions in their retirement accounts.

Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.), Gerry Connolly (D-Va.), Don Bacon (R-Neb.) and David Valadao (R-Calif.) reintroduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act last week.

Even though many temporary feds eventually transition to permanent employment in the government, seasonal and temporary federal employees currently don’t have the opportunity to make retirement contributions during their time spent in their previous, temporary roles.

Several years ago, lawmakers said they noticed that formerly temporary workers had to work longer than their colleagues in government to receive the same retirement benefits. To try to correct the disparity, Kilmer first introduced the Federal Retirement Fairness Act in 2019.

Decades ago, the Office of Personnel Management did let these federal employees make catch-up contributions, Kilmer said. But Congress eliminated the option when the federal government transitioned to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) in the 1980s.

The Federal Retirement Fairness Act aims to give former seasonal and temporary federal employees, such as wildland firefighters and park rangers, who convert to full-time government employment a chance to make catch-up retirement contributions to be able to retire on time.

So far, there is no Senate companion bill for the House legislation.

Unions and federal organizations, including the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the Federal Managers Association (FMA) and the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) are supportive of the bipartisan bill.

“These dedicated workers face a choice — leave the federal service without full retirement benefits or work longer than their peers to obtain their full retirement benefits,” NFFE National President Randy Erwin said in a statement. “For workers in physically demanding or dangerous jobs, this is a choice between two bad options — retire without the security you thought you would have, or put your health and safety at risk by working a few years longer than the rest of your peers.”

Beyond the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, here are three other bills to watch.

Greater death benefits for civilian federal employees

Both House and Senate lawmakers are taking another shot at increasing death benefits for the civilian federal workforce.

The legislation, which Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.), and Reps. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), reintroduced earlier this month, would update the benefit amounts for families or survivors of civilian federal employees who die while performing job duties.

Families of federal employees who are killed on duty receive a one-time benefit payment as well as a payment to help cover funeral expenses.

Sinema and other bipartisan co-sponsors said the Honoring Civil Servants Killed in the Line of Duty Act would bring death benefits for civilian federal employees in line with the benefit amounts that military members already receive.

Right now, eligible survivors of Foreign Service and military members who die either while on active duty or while serving in certain reserve statuses receive a one-time, tax-free payment of \$100,000, regardless of the cause of death.

Continue next page

National News

But for civilian federal workers, the amount included in death gratuities has not been updated since 1997. The coverage amount for funeral expenses has not changed since 1966.

Currently, survivors of federal employees who die while performing work duties receive \$10,000 in a one-time benefit and \$800 to cover funeral expenses.

If the bill is passed, the benefit amounts would increase ten-fold. Survivors would receive \$100,000 in the death benefit payment and another \$8,800 to go toward funeral expenses.

“This gap in the law has devastating consequences for family members who must now face financial and emotional strain at the same time,” Larry Cosme, national president of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, said in a statement. “This legislation solves that problem to ensure all survivors of federal employees killed in the line of duty are entitled to equal and robust financial benefits to honor their lost public servants.”

The bill also aims to prevent the death benefit amounts from becoming outdated by including an automatic cost-of-living adjustment to the death and funeral benefits.

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) plans to mark up the legislation Wednesday.

Long-time effort to repeal Social Security “evil twins”

Some retired federal employees and their spouses may see yet another chance at receiving full Social Security benefits.

Reps. Garrett Graves (R-La.) and Abigail Spanberger (D-Va.), and Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Susan Collins (R-Maine), reintroduced the bicameral Social Security Fairness Act in January.

If enacted, the bill would revoke the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). The two decades-old provisions of the 1935 Social Security Act reduce or in some cases eliminate Social Security benefits for one particular subset of retirees in the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

The WEP specifically affects federal employees and other public sector workers who receive an annuity from their time in government but who also worked in a Social Security-covered job, usually a position in the private sector. The WEP does not impact retirees in the Federal Employees Retirement System, since FERS employees already pay into Social Security.

Lawmakers have continuously reintroduced the bill for decades, but just last year, the legislation gained some unprecedented traction. Last Congress’ version of the bipartisan legislation had 305 House cosponsors and 42 Senate cosponsors.

Currently, the Social Security Fairness Act has 298 cosponsors in the House — above the 290-member threshold necessary to file a motion to put the bill on the House consensus calendar.

By passing that threshold, it’s possible that the House Ways and Means Committee could take up the bill and advance it. Alternatively, though less likely, lawmakers may be able to force a floor vote.

Several other introduced bills would also alter WEP and GPO for federal retirees:

- Public Servants Protection and Fairness Act
- Social Security 2100 Act
- Equal Treatment of Public Servants Act

Bringing more “accountability” to federal telework

Finally, lawmakers took another approach to address the future of telework and remote work policies for the federal workforce.

Earlier this month, Sens. James Lankford (R-Okla.) and Kyrsten Sinema (I-Ariz.) introduced the Telework Reform Act, aiming to add more accountability and transparency to federal telework.

Specifically, the Telework Reform Act would codify the working definitions of telework and remote work, in effect requiring teleworking federal employees to report to the office at least twice per two-week pay period.

Among its many provisions, the bill would also set more data requirements and call on agencies to report to Congress annually on productivity outcomes and cost savings of telework and remote work.

The legislation was referred to HSGAC, but so far there is no companion bill in the house.