

West Virginia Legislative Issues Survey: Social Security and Unemployment Insurance

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Represents the Views of 285,300+ AARP Members



West Virginia Legislative Issues Survey:

Social Security and Unemployment Insurance Offset

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West Virginia denies concurrent Social Security and unemployment benefits.

West Virginia is one of 15 states that “offsets” Social Security retirement benefits against unemployment benefits. In West Virginia, it means that when an older worker who is already collecting Social Security retirement benefits becomes unemployed, that individual will receive no unemployment benefits. AARP’s position is that the worker has earned both benefits by having been in the paid labor force, and it is unfair to subtract one from the other. The offset should be eliminated.

AARP Survey Examines Support for Changes to West Virginia State Law Concerning Social Security and Unemployment Insurance Offset.

AARP surveyed 2,000 randomly selected AARP members in West Virginia; 1,161 members responded. This mail survey shows that a majority supports changes to the West Virginia state law concerning the Social Security and Unemployment Insurance offset.

West Virginia members support changing the law to allow people to claim Social Security and unemployment benefits simultaneously.

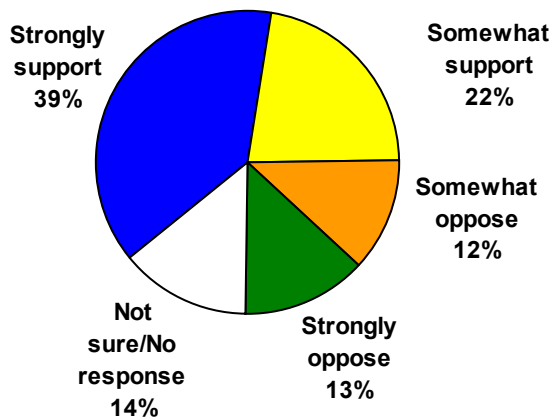
Survey respondents were asked if they support changing West Virginia law to allow people to claim Social Security and unemployment benefits at the same time.

Unemployment benefits are paid to workers who have lost their jobs. Employers pay into the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund on behalf of their workers. If older workers who are already collecting Social Security retirement benefits lose their jobs, federal law allows those who qualify to collect both Social Security and full unemployment benefits

simultaneously. However, the state of West Virginia currently eliminates all unemployment benefits if a person is collecting Social Security retirement benefits.

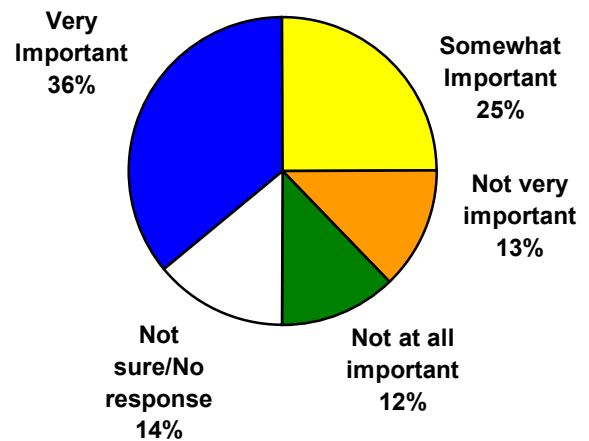
Sixty-one percent of members would support West Virginia changing its law to allow individuals who qualify to receive Social Security and full unemployment benefits simultaneously.

Support for WV Changing its Law to Allow People to Claim Social Security and Unemployment Benefits
n = 1,161



Sixty-one percent of members think it is *very or somewhat important* for AARP West Virginia to work to change state law to allow individuals who qualify to receive Social Security and full unemployment benefits simultaneously.

Importance for AARP WV to Change State Law to Allow Individuals to Receive Social Security and Unemployment Benefits
n = 1,161

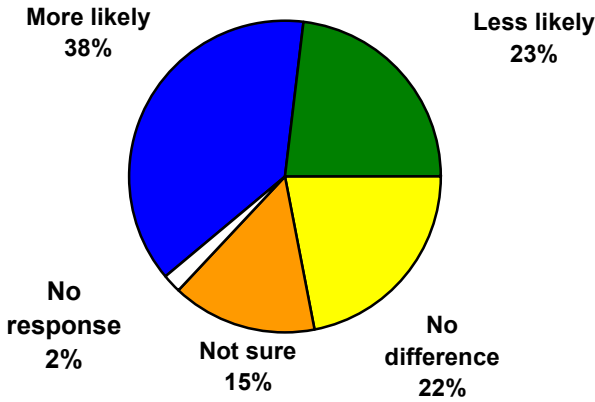


Nearly four in ten West Virginia members say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports changing the law to allow people to claim Social Security and unemployment benefits simultaneously.

Thirty-eight percent of AARP members say they are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports changing West Virginia law to allow people to claim Social Security and unemployment benefits simultaneously.

Twenty-two percent of members say a candidate's support for changing the law would make no difference, while 23 percent are less likely to vote for a candidate who supports changing the state law.

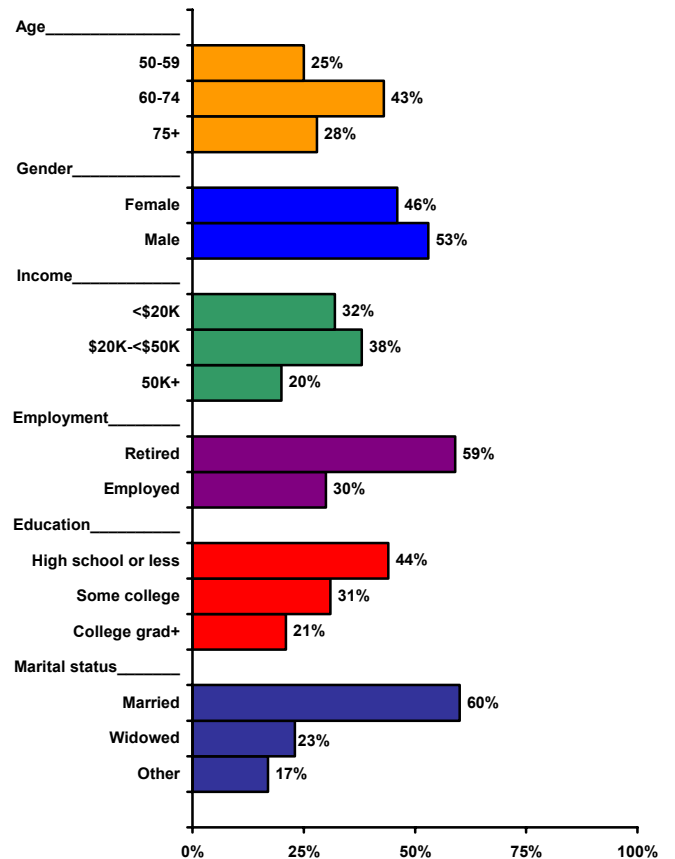
Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate Who Supports Changing WV Law to Allow People to Claim Social Security and Unemployment Benefits
n = 1,161



Methodology

AARP conducted the West Virginia member survey between November and December 2004. A sample of 2,000 AARP members in West Virginia, proportionally stratified by three age segments—50 to 59, 60 to 74, and 75+, was selected from AARP’s membership database. Each sampled member was contacted about the survey in four ways: a pre-notification postcard, the survey itself, a reminder postcard, and a second survey. Fifty-eight percent of the sampled West Virginia members returned surveys by the cut-off date, providing 1,161 usable surveys for analysis. The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 2.9 percent.

Members’ Demographic Profile
n=1,161



Annotated Questions

Responses to all Social Security and Unemployment Insurance survey questions are attached. For a copy of the full survey, go to <http://research.aarp.org>.

Sample = 1,161
Response Rate = 58%
Sampling Error = +/- 2.9%

NOTE: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

3. Unemployment insurance, a safety net program, is paid to workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Businesses are required to pay into the unemployment insurance fund on behalf of their workers. Federal law allows qualifying workers who have lost their jobs and who have begun collecting Social Security retirement benefits to collect both unemployment and Social Security benefits at the same time. However, West Virginia law currently eliminates all unemployment benefits if a person is also collecting Social Security retirement benefits.

Would you support or oppose West Virginia changing its law to allow individuals who qualify to receive both Social Security retirement benefits and full unemployment benefits at the same time?

%	
39	Strongly Support
22	Somewhat Support
12	Somewhat Oppose
13	Strongly Oppose
13	Not Sure
1	No Response

4. How important do you think it is for AARP West Virginia to work to change state law to allow individuals who qualify to receive both Social Security retirement benefits and full unemployment benefits at the same time?

%	
36	Very important
25	Somewhat important
13	Not very important
12	Not at all important
12	Not Sure
2	No Response

5. If a candidate for state office in West Virginia supported changing state law to allow individuals who qualify to receive both Social Security retirement benefits and full unemployment benefits at the same time, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for him or her, or would it not make any difference?

%	
38	More likely
23	Less likely
22	Would make no difference
15	Not sure
2	No Response

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