

# Federal Retirement Safety Act



U.S. CONGRESSMAN  
**JOE NEGUSE**

---

*The Federal Retirement Safety Act will help protect recent survivors of domestic violence or intimate partner violence by ensuring that they no longer need to disclose personal information to their abuser in order to receive their federal retirement benefits.*

---

## **BACKGROUND**

The current or former spouse of a retiring federal employee is entitled to a portion of the federal employee's annuity unless the spouse formally consents to receive a lesser amount or no survivor benefit. As part of the paperwork to request spousal consent to change annuity distributions, a retiring federal employee must provide her current or former spouse with personal information, such as her phone number and address. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) can waive the spousal consent requirement in extenuating circumstances, such as the death of a spouse or inability to determine their whereabouts. Unfortunately, this does not include a specific exemption for recent survivors of domestic violence, who could jeopardize their safety by disclosing personal information to a current or former spouse. The current process to obtain an extenuating-circumstances waiver requires heavy documentation that is often inaccessible to survivors whose personal safety is at imminent risk. This bill would add a new exemption to allow recent survivors to access their hard-earned retirement benefits without forcing them to provide personal information to their abusers.

## **THIS BILL WOULD:**

- Create a new waiver that allows retiring federal employees who are recent survivors of domestic or intimate partner violence to be provided reasonable protections when obtaining the spousal consent necessary to change their retirement benefits distribution.
- Allow OPM to promulgate regulations to implement the exemption, including:
  - Procedures to provide notice or obtain consent from the current or former spouse that ensures the safety of the employee.
  - Procedures to allow employees to self-certify that they are a recent survivor of domestic or intimate partner violence.