



June 12, 2018

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the Federal-Postal Coalition, which represents the interests of more than five million federal and postal employees and retirees across the country, I urge you to appropriate federal workers a meaningful pay raise in line with private-sector pay increases for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019.

Under current law (the Federal Employees' Pay Comparability Act), federal employees should receive a 2.1 percent pay raise in January 2019, prior to any amount being provided for locality pay rate increases. As you know, locality pay has never been implemented as intended due to the large costs involved. According to the President's Pay Agent, which reports pay gaps in certain local areas as well as a national average pay gap based on Bureau of Labor Statistics survey data comparing private sector and federal government pay, found that, as of March 2016, private-sector workers are paid 34.02 percent more than federal workers engaged in substantially equal work.

Ongoing pay trends in the private-sector marketplace point to an average base pay increase of 3 percent in 2018 for private-sector workers, as reported by the Society for Human Resource Management, World at Work, and Willis Towers Watson.¹ Consistent with that estimate, Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI) have introduced the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act, H.R. 4775 and S. 2295, calling for a 3 percent pay adjustment in 2019 for federal workers covered by the General Schedule and Wage Grade systems. The Coalition supports this legislation as a means to provide an increase comparable to the private sector.

Nonetheless, President Trump has called for a pay freeze for federal workers in his FY 2019 Budget Request despite a growing economy and private sector wage growth. Prior to 2011, Congress routinely appropriated federal pay raises. It has only abrogated that responsibility in recent years, leaving appropriations bills silent on the matter. This cedes the authority to grant a federal raise, or not, to the President.

Federal employees need to be provided adequate pay raises to ensure a qualified, professional and skilled workforce is onboard administering our nation's laws and programs. Federal employees, who live and work in every state and congressional district across the country, serve as scientists, accountants, doctors and nurses, park rangers, law enforcement officers, and much more. They provide critical services for our nation and the American people.

¹ See: <https://www.willistowerswatson.com/en/press/2017/08/us-employees-in-line-for-another-3-percent-pay-raise-in-2018>; <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/compensation/pages/2018-salary-increase-budgets.aspx>

Lagging federal pay rates have taken a toll on federal employees and their families over the last few years, with their pay raises trailing private sector wage and salary increases. Like all American workers and middle-class taxpayers, federal employees face ever-increasing costs of living, with rising utility, health care and food bills, along with school loan and rent or mortgage obligations. All federal employees deserve an adequate pay raise that is comparable to increases for their private-sector counterparts.

According to private-sector wage data from the Department of Labor's Employment Cost Index, average private industry wages increased by 10.4 percent over the last 5 years. In contrast, federal employees faced extended pay freezes in 2011, 2012, and 2013 and reduced pay adjustments in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. Combined, these below market pay adjustments and freezes, along with the dramatic increases to retirement contributions for new federal employees in both 2012 and 2013, have already cost federal employees approximately \$200 billion, as scored over a ten-year period.

We urge Congress to assume its proper role, and return to the practice of appropriating an increase in federal pay rates. The President's call for a pay freeze necessitates Congressional action to ensure that the federal government can compete with the private sector for highly qualified employees and retain top talent. We urge you to call for federal workers to receive a meaningful pay increase in the FY 2019 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)
American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
FAA Managers Association (FAAMA)
Federal Managers Association (FMA)
International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF)
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV)
National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS)
National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA)
National Education Association (NEA)
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU)
National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO)
Patent Office Professional Association (POPA)
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS)

Professional Managers Association (PMA)

Senior Executives Association (SEA)

United Postmasters and Managers of America (UPMA)