



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

John Gage
National President

J. David Cox, Sr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

Augusta Y. Thomas
National Vice President for
Women and Fair Practices

December 2, 2010

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the more than 600,000 federal employees in 65 agencies represented by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), I am writing to ask you to oppose any proposal to freeze federal pay.

In 1990, Congress passed and President George Bush signed the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA) which was designed to accomplish two things: take the politics out of federal pay, and close the measured gap between federal salaries and private sector salaries on a region-by-region basis. Bipartisan majorities in Congress enacted FEPCA so that federal pay would be adjusted solely according to data from the private sector as measured by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Objective data, not politics, is supposed to dictate federal pay rates and annual adjustments.

No one can even pretend that the freeze will have a measurable impact on any problem that the deficit might create now or in the future. The freeze will not spur economic growth or job creation, it will not lower interest rates, and it will not free up resources for refurbishing the nation's public infrastructure. It will do nothing but create operational and morale problems in federal agencies and programs, and impoverish the already modestly-paid federal workforce.

Contrary to the disinformation that has poisoned the debate over federal sector compensation, the actual average salary for federal workers is \$74,311. In fact, over a million federal employees (out of a total of two million) earn less than \$70,000 annually. For example, the starting salary for a VA nursing assistant in Chicago, Illinois, is \$27,322. For a correctional officer in Loretto, Pennsylvania, the starting salary is \$38,619. A Border Patrol agent in San Diego starts out at \$34,067, while a mine inspector in Cheyenne, Wyoming earns \$38,790. Salaries for DoD civilian police officers at Fort Hood, like the courageous two who brought down the shooter a little over a year ago, start at \$34,907. A pay freeze singles out for economic pain working and middle class Americans who have dedicated their lives to public service – often in dangerous occupations.

Again, I urge you to oppose any language implementing the pay freeze that might be offered to upcoming appropriations legislation. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-639-6404 or motenb@afge.org.

Sincerely yours,

Beth Moten
Legislative and Political Director

