



## National Federation of Federal Employees, IAMAW, AFL-CIO



### NFFE-IAM Opposes Efforts to Cut or Freeze Federal Workers' Pay

**Position:** In recent years, federal employees have been under constant threat of having their pay cut or frozen. Federal employees have already incurred \$114 billion in cuts to their pay and retirement security within the last three years. Despite the fact that federal workers make an average of 35% less than private sector workers doing the same jobs, federal employees are still being targeted for cuts. NFFE-IAM strongly opposes these unfair proposals that aim to place a disproportionate amount of our nation's debt burden on federal workers like VA nurses and doctors, U.S. Border Patrol agents, and USDA food inspectors. Three years of frozen pay is enough; the federal pay freeze should be lifted.

Early in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, proposals are being put forward to further freeze federal workers' pay. In March of 2013, Congress froze federal employee pay for a third consecutive year. Federal workers have now contributed \$114 billion toward deficit reduction in the last three years through targeted cuts to civilian federal employees' pay and retirement security.

Contrary to numerous myths contrived by non-government sources about federal employee compensation, federal workers are simply not overpaid; they are significantly underpaid compared to workers performing the same jobs in the private sector. Based on data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and reported by the Office of Personnel Management, private sector workers continue to have a significant salary advantage over federal employees. This advantage has grown significantly in recent years. In 2012, private sector employees received 35% more annual compensation than federal employees working similar jobs. This pay gap not only frustrates the federal workers at many of our critical government agencies, but it also discourages our younger job-seekers from looking towards our federal government for stable, competitive employment.

While false reports of inflated federal compensation and a broad focus on deficit reduction have led to forceful calls by some lawmakers to reduce federal pay, history shows that the underlying rationale for reducing federal compensation – that federal workers are overpaid – is not based in fact. In every year of the last decade, regardless of political party, the administration in office has acknowledged a double-digit pay discrepancy between federal employees and higher-paid private sector workers. In fact, even before the effects of large federal spending cuts had set in, President George W. Bush's President's Pay Agent certified a 23% percent pay gap. That's right; just a few short years ago, President Bush certified that federal workers were drastically *underpaid*. They were underpaid then, and they continue to be underpaid today.

To keep our country on a sustainable path forward, we need to preserve policies that attract and retain the best American workers. Freezing or cutting pay sends the wrong signal to the best and brightest workers federal agencies need to recruit and retain in order to continue to provide quality services to the American people.

Federal employees are doing their part to lower government costs, and have already made sacrifices by accepting a three-year pay freeze. The pay freezes federal employees have already incurred will cost the average federal employee \$50,000 over the course of her career.

NFFE-IAM opposes proposals to freeze federal employee pay for additional years. We also oppose other attempts to effectively freeze federal pay, like suspending within grade step increases.