

# NFFE NEWS



## RELEASE



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## NFFE SUPPORTS BILL TO GRANT FEDERAL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT BENEFIT FOR UNUSED SICK LEAVE

**Washington, D.C.** – The National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE), a national union representing 100,000 federal government workers, endorses the FERS Sick Leave Equity Act, a bill that would provide federal employees enrolled under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) compensation for accrued sick leave upon retirement.

Under the current system, federal workers enrolled under FERS do not receive compensation for residual sick leave when retiring.

“The ‘use it or lose it’ sick leave policy under FERS is unfair to the workers,” said Richard N. Brown, National President of NFFE. “The sick leave that federal employees accrue over their careers is a benefit they have earned. They deserve to be compensated in some way for not using that time.”

While workers under FERS receive no benefit for unused sick leave, their counterparts enrolled under the older Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) have their unused sick time added to their time of service in calculating their retirement annuity. This legislation would promote fundamental fairness in the federal retirement process by giving employees enrolled under FERS the same benefit for unused sick leave as CSRS employees.

“The federal government got the unused sick leave issue right under CSRS,” said Brown. “They gave employees a modest benefit for their time, and absentee rates remained very low. That system worked well for everyone. It makes a lot of sense to return to a system where the judicious use of sick leave is rewarded, not penalized.”

Lost efficiency at agencies due to high rates of absenteeism near retirement is a serious problem. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) estimated in a May 2006 report that the lost productivity caused by the increased use of sick leave by FERS employees who were eligible or nearly eligible to retire cost the federal government \$68 million during the April 2005 through March 2006 time period.

“This legislation is really a win-win for federal employees and tax-payers,” said Brown. “This legislation will make the federal government a more attractive place to work because it will increase the value of federal workers’ retirement packages. At the same time it will increase government efficiency by incentivizing low absenteeism.”

NFFE thanks Reps. James P. Moran (D-VA) and Frank R. Wolf (R-VA) for introducing this important legislation.

Link to the bill language: <http://www.nffe.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/8330>

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*Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is the oldest union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE currently represents 100,000 federal employees government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.*