



October 19, 2011

Mr. Flynn McRoberts
Bloomberg News
Chicago

Dear Mr. McRoberts:

As the leader of the nation's largest independent union of federal employees, I would like to clarify an assumption contained in a Bloomberg news article published today (Top Income in U.S. Is...Gasp!...Wash D.C. Area). The story claims that the income of federal employees is one of the strong drivers causing the Washington, D.C., area to lead the nation in income.

I take issue with that conclusion. The salary of federal employees in the Washington, D.C., area pales in comparison to the salaries of the tens of thousands of lobbyists and government contractors who also live and work in the nation's capital.

Consider that the federal government may pay up to \$700,000 each to executives of a private firm under contract to the government. There is not a single federal employee who takes home a salary that comes close to that amount. The cost of federal contracts exceeds by billions of dollars the cost of the entire federal payroll.

Proposals have been made to rein in the exorbitant funds paid to private-sector employees under contract to the government that would limit the compensation to the much smaller amount allowed under the Senior Executive Service pay schedule. The National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) strongly supports this idea.

The fact is that the vast majority of federal employees earn middle class wages, and their pay cannot reasonably be compared with that of either contractors or those on Wall Street. The federal workforce is full of committed and dedicated people who have chosen to work on behalf of our country despite the fact that many of them would receive much higher salaries in the private sector.

Colleen M. Kelley, National President
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