

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Americas / By Ma

## Why Government Workers Earn Higher Wages

In your Aug. 15 editorial "Welcome to Club Fed," you relied on an analysis of the pay and benefits of federal employees compared with the entire private sector workforce that fails to recognize the differences in these two workforces. The federal workforce is increasingly made up of highly skilled professionals, including attorneys, accountants and a broad range of scientific experts.

Since a much larger percentage of federal employees hold college and advanced degrees than do those in the private sector, the comparison of the white-collar federal workforce to the entire private sector workforce—which contains a large segment of retail and service workers—isn't really fair. A more appropriate comparison would be similar jobs in both sectors.

You quote unidentified studies as saying that public-sector workers (leaving the impression you are referring to federal employees) enjoy a 20% to 30% pay bonus over comparably skilled private employees. The reality, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is that the pay gap actually favors private sector workers over federal employees by about 13%—even after the inclusion of federal locality pay.

Your argument that federal workers cannot be dismissed for cause is not true.

## China Will Peg Yuan To Basket of Currencies

In his Aug. 29 editorial-page commentary "The Yuan and the Greenback," Ronald I. McKinnon correctly describes the renminbi exchange system as "unhooked" from its original rigid peg to the dollar. But it was not only unhooked from its original peg to the dollar to be reconsidered in purely dollar values. Zhou Xiaochuan, governor of the People's Bank of China, said that it would be valued by a basket of currencies, including the dollar, the yen, the euro and the South Korean won. This international perspective tells us more about yuan appreciation than U.S. inflation. It is also a better gauge for China than the dollar's real value; a focus on non-U.S. currencies allows China to more accurately match its currency with its trading partners, a list which is rapidly expanding and becoming more important to China, whether the U.S. likes it or not.

Josh Lipman  
Iowa City, Iowa

## Impeachment Campaign Just Got a Little Tougher

Shame on Richard Armitage for quietly letting the White House and Scooter

Federal managers have a wide range of disciplinary tools, including termination of employment, at their disposal. The example in your article about the federal worker who was fired for missing work to attend her mother's funeral three times only to be reinstated due to an anti-discrimination lawsuit is an untrue and offensive caricature.

Colleen M. Kelley  
National President  
National Treasury Employees Union  
Washington

You say the average federal civil worker makes more than the average private sector worker. That's true, but this isn't even an apples and oranges comparison—it's more apples and filet mignon. The federal government doesn't sell fast food or operate large-scale retail stores using minimum-wage employees. So yes, medical researchers at the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease control are paid more than entry-level workers at McDonald's. Yes, intelligence analysts in the Department of Defense and State Department diplomats working under harsh conditions around the world are paid more than Wal-Mart greeters. And, yes, the thousands of dedicated doctors and nurses caring for our wounded and disabled veterans in the Department of Veterans Affairs are paid more than a new barrista at Starbucks.

Max Stier  
President  
Partnership for Public Service  
Washington

## Praying for Wise Decision For Ave Maria Law School

I appreciated the unusually long list of people Naomi Schaefer Riley interviewed for her story on Ave Maria University ("The Weekend Interview with Tom Monaghan: Domino's Illuminatio Meal," editorial page, Aug. 19). Unfortunately, she did not get to speak to me. The quote she used from me was not inaccurate, but it had been given to another reporter in a fuller context. I would like to elaborate on that context, in a way that may shed light on Ms. Riley's point.

I have full sympathy for faculty members in Michigan, first at Ave Maria College and second at the Law School there, who have many good reasons not to want to be uprooted (for most of them again, and so soon): reasons of health, family, children just adjusting to school, climate, proximity to relatives, and even proximity to a great university like the University of Michigan, with its justly

There is something President Evo doesn't inspire prosperous, democratic freedom. And it's not only the way he makes with the struggle wears like a uniform.

For a good many Bolivians of civil liberties and Just ask Marcela Nogales, mother of two pre-teens who ter's degree in auditing a trol from Bolivian Catholic joint program with Harvard

Mrs. Nogales, who manager of the Central for five years until Mr. tained in a Bolivian prison six weeks at the behest government. She has yet

This detention, a flag Bolivian law, appears broader campaign against connected with modernization past decade. As such, it nited the fears of Bolivians are deeply concerned that is heading toward an aut state under Mr. Morales

Evo has already badly economy. Exhibit A is his 1, amidst the biggest ene history of humankind, to investments of foreign e in his gas-rich country. P vado felt good to the coun nous leader in modern tin making a political calcul one important variable: E poor, it seems, that it has expertise to exploit the g

On Aug. 11 the govern the suspension of the full t

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