



2019 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

ACHIEVING PAY EQUITY

Lagging federal pay rates have taken a toll on federal employees and their families over the last few years, with their pay raises trailing increases to private sector wages. Like all American workers and middle-class taxpayers, federal employees face ever-increasing utility, health care, food, and college bills, as well as rent and mortgage obligations. But unlike many in the private sector, federal employees have continued to see below market pay increases. Over the past 5 years, federal pay increases of 8.2 percent barely kept up with inflation, while, according to private-sector wage data from the Department of Labor's Employment Cost Index, private industry wages increased by an average 11.2 percent.

Recent extended pay freezes (in 2011, 2012, and 2013) and reduced pay adjustments (in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019), coupled with congressional action to dramatically increase retirement contributions for new federal employees in both 2012 and 2013, have already resulted in federal employees contributing approximately \$200 billion toward deficit reduction over ten years. Unfortunately, last year, the President again proposed a pay freeze for federal workers for 2019 and a fund to provide pay increases to individuals in certain undefined occupations, despite reports from Willis Towers Watson and others that point to an average base pay increase of 3.1 percent for private-sector workers.

NTEU was pleased that Congress rejected the President's pay freeze and provided an average 1.9 percent pay raise to federal employees this year. Competitive pay helps ensure a professional, skilled workforce is on board administering our nation's laws and programs. Federal employees — who live and work in every state and congressional district across the country — serve as scientists, accountants, customer service representatives, park rangers, and law enforcement officers — providing critical services for our nation and the American people.

Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI) have introduced the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) pay bill, H.R. 1073 and S. 426, calling for a 3.6 percent pay adjustment for 2020 for federal workers covered by the General Schedule and Wage Grade systems. NTEU believes that all federal employees, regardless of pay system and employing agency, deserve an adequate pay raise that is comparable to increases for their private-sector counterparts. The federal government must have an equitable and transparent pay system that does not cherry-pick certain occupations, agencies, or group of employees for pay raises.

NTEU urges:

- **Support for Congressman Connolly's and Senator Schatz's pay bills — H.R. 1073 and S. 426 — that provide a 3.6 percent pay adjustment for 2020.**
- **Support for adequate and equitable pay raises, regardless of pay system, occupation, and employing agency.**