



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, IAMAW, AFL-CIO



NFFE-IAM Urges Congress to Stop a Pay Cliff that will Cripple the Federal Wildland Firefighter Workforce and its Incident Response Capabilities

Position: **15,000 Federal Wildland Firefighters (WFF) from the U.S. Forest Service (USDA) and Bureau of Land Management (DOI) endure longer, and more dangerous wildfire seasons each year with the loss of life and property increasing at a phenomenal rate. For a fraction of what the government pays annually for wildfire disaster relief to devastated communities and in losses of permanently scorched lands, the government can end this recruitment, retention, and response crisis. Smart investments can save lives, property, and disaster relief funding while supporting professional and highly trained federal WFFs.**

Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act (WFPPA). NFFE urgently requests the passage of WFPPA (H.R. 5169 / S. 2272). Democrats and Republicans strongly agree that permanently stopping the pay cliff through the WFPPA is critical to the success of federal wildland fire services. WFPPA would:

1. *Permanently Increase Federal Wildland Firefighter Pay.* The bill would avoid the impending pay cliff by permanently increasing wildland firefighter pay at levels at or near those enacted within the current temporary increase that was extended from legislation passed in 2021 (IIJA).
2. *Establish a new Pay Scale for Wildland Firefighters.* The bulk of the pay increases within the bill are realized via the establishment of a new pay scale for wildland firefighters at all grade levels similar to the General Schedule (GS) pay scale that is applicable to most federal employees.
3. *Establish Additional Pay Supplements for Wildland Firefighters.* Base pay is supplemented by additional pay for each day a firefighter is deployed on a wildland fire.
4. *Require Consistency in Agencies' Policies Related to Work-Life Balance.* To limit burnout, the bill directs agencies to ensure proper rest and recuperation for wildland firefighters.

YOU ALREADY VOTED FOR WFPPA if you voted for any continuing resolution since 2023 or voted for FY 2024 appropriations. The authority for the temporary pay increase that expired in 2023 was extended in each of the continuing resolutions and was fully funded in the FY 2024 appropriations bills. As an authorizing bill, WFPPA has the bipartisan and bicameral "blessing" of appropriators.

BUILT-IN OFFSETS: Appropriators realize that automatic offsets will occur from smaller and fewer wildfires, delivering: 1) less contracting to expensive state and private services, 2) saving on remediation costs, 3) more prescribed burns that prevent fires, 4) more effective use of current resources (e.g., fire engines and hotshot crews sitting idle due to low staffing), and 5) less FEMA and other financial assistance to wildfire victims and towns.

Wildland Firefighter Fair Pay Act. NFFE urgently requests the passage of S. 3221 / H.R. 6195, a bipartisan, bicameral bill to raise the caps on overtime pay for hours worked. Right now, wildland firefighters exceed an arbitrary cap on overtime pay which means they are NOT PAID for all the hours they work. They work a grueling and dangerous job FOR FREE during peak fire months because of an outdated OT pay cap.

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The Tim Hart Wildland Firefighter Classification and Pay Parity Act. NFFE requests the passage of S. 1505/ H.R. 3108, also known as “Tim’s Act.” If passed, this bill would deliver necessary sweeping reforms for pay, working conditions, physical and mental wellness, and strengthen the recruitment and retention of WFFs.

Modernized Compensation. Federal wildland firefighting job series are decades out of date and no longer recognize modern job markets and cost-of-living realities. Annual applicant rates are 50% lower than historic levels, and attrition is at a historic high as personnel leave for non-federal firefighting jobs.

- Base Pay. Starting base pay for WFFs is woefully low at \$11.86 per hour. The ascent up the GS scale is very slow. The rise to Captain (GS-8) takes at least 7 years (often with relocation) to achieve pay at \$20.00 per hour. Instead, a starting minimum of \$20.00 per hour is critical, and should be supported by additional, ample opportunities to supplement pay via certifications and promotions.
- Fair Pay for Long Hours and Dangerous Work. WFFs are deployed for weeks or months at a time in remote areas. They endure hostile conditions and 18-hour workdays, and they need time to rest each day and between deployments. They deserve pay for every hour deployed or on assignment and Hazard Pay for other hazardous work like fuels management, prescribed burns, and suppression support. Specialized training and certifications should be reflected in their pay. Seasonal work should count toward retirement because seasonal work is no less dangerous, and counting this time will help with retention.

Improved Health and Wellness

- Access and Services for Mental Health. WFFs are 12 times more likely to commit suicide than the national average. It is a major issue among wildland firefighters, especially for seasonal firefighters who lose their connection to support mechanisms in the off-season. WFFs need support with mental and physical trauma endured after months of fighting fires and other catastrophes. WFFs need better mental health access, awareness, and treatment programs.
- Wellness Tracking and Preventative Medicine. Exposure to chemicals, smoke, and hazardous environments leads to injury and illness over time. WFFs need access to preventative medicine to identify and track injuries and exposure-related disease. Seasonal WFFs also need better access to mental health care and physical wellness and tracking during the off-season.

Better Working Conditions and Opportunities

- Reasonable Living Conditions. WFFs deserve adequate facilities for lodging during assignments to limit the need to sleep in cars or on the ground except for emergency situations. WFFs regularly endure substandard housing with infestations, water damage, and electrical problems. Not only are these living quarters unhealthy, but they also crush morale and self-esteem which leads to burnout and depression.
- Career Mobility and Training. WFFs are siloed into careers which expedite burnout and limits human capital expertise. WFFs need 1) cross-discipline mobility and opportunities during their careers to grow as professionals and during WFF careers, 2) improved access to training to limit WFFs paying out of pocket for expensive training to advance their careers, 3) automatic conversion from seasonal to permanent employee within the first three seasons.

Modified Retirement Incentives. Essential to effective retention and recruitment efforts, seasonal WFFs need an incentive to return each year, and permanent firefighters need incentives to stay. High attrition rates offset any marginal gains in hiring. As a result, federal assets (fire engines, half crews, Hotshot operations) remain shuttered in federal fire stations as the government increasingly relies on costly outsourced help.

- Creditable Service. Before FERS, seasonal and temporary work counted toward retirement. This must return to keep both temporary and permanent WFFs from leaving.
- Enhanced Annuities. Premium pay must count toward otherwise paltry retirement annuities.



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, IAMAW, AFL-CIO



NFFE-IAM Supports the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act (H.R. 7127 / S. 3688)

Position: Federal employees have sacrificed a tremendous amount in the name of deficit reduction in the last decade. They were forced to accept several years of pay freezes, and paltry increases in other years. Federal employee wages continue to lag far behind private sector wage increases in the same time period. Years of substandard pay adjustments have led to federal workers making an average of 27.5% less than private sector workers performing the same jobs, according to the Federal Salary Council. This is unsustainable. The Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act introduced in 2024 would provide federal workers with a much needed 4.0% average pay adjustment and 3.4% increase to locality pay in 2025. Since 2011, federal employees have sacrificed over \$200 billion in the name of deficit reduction. Federal workers deserve an adequate pay adjustment especially considering rising inflation and costs of living. NFFE strongly *supports* the FAIR Act.

The country witnessed firsthand the panic and desperation of hundreds of thousands of federal workers as they struggled to pay for rent, mortgages, medications, heating, childcare, and food. While some in Congress mischaracterize federal workers as over-paid, the truth becomes obvious through the federal government's struggle to recruit and retain workers across the board. The 27.5% pay gap that favors the private sector is factual, and any disruption in pay or annuities to federal families is devastating. Public servants deserve better. At minimum, they deserve fair pay.

After years of pay freezes and followed by meager annual adjustments, federal workers have seen their incomes decrease by more than 15% with respect to inflation over the past decade. Based on the data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics 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 the last decade. This ballooning pay gap not only frustrates the federal workers at many of our critical government agencies, but it also discourages younger jobseekers from looking towards the federal government for stable, competitive employment.

In 2005, the President's Pay Agent reported that the public-private pay gap was just 13%. Today, the federal pay gap stands at 27.5%. So, federal workers have lost nearly 18% of pay relative to the private sector since 2005, and the methodology to calculate these gaps has been virtually unchanged. To keep our country on a sustainable path forward, federal agencies and departments must be able to recruit and retain a qualified and talented workforce. Providing inadequate pay adjustments year after year makes this difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish. As a result of the squeeze on federal workers' pay, morale in the federal workforce has fallen dramatically, and critical services to the American people are suffering.

Federal employees have made significant financial sacrifices in the name of deficit reduction - nearly \$100,000 per federal employee - which is hurting communities where federal employees reside across the country. This affects every congressional district and state. **Support a 7.4% pay increase in 2024** consistent with H.R. 7127 / S. 3688, the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act, sponsored by Rep. Connolly in the House and Sen. Schatz in the Senate.



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NFFE-IAM and the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

Position: The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) provides the annual budget and related expenditures for the U.S. Department of Defense. The NDAA also provides guidance on many important policy changes to federal operations and the workforce. As the 118th Congress continues to debate the NDAA for FY 2025, NFFE-IAM urgently requests the following inclusions:

Do Not Stop Hiring to Shrink the DoD Civilian Workforce – For no legitimate reason, uninformed advocates on Capitol Hill wish to reduce the size of the DoD civilian workforce through delayed hiring of replacements as personnel leave or retire. The size of the civilian federal workforce has changed little since the major downsizing after WWII. **The raw number of DoD civilian employees is smaller than it was in 1947.** Yet, the country is more than twice as populated than it was in the 1940s and U.S. global engagements today last longer and are more plentiful in both number and geographic locations. In addition, outsourcing jobs cannot replace the institutional knowledge and public trust placed in federal employees to oversee mission and accountability.

Include the Federal Firefighter Pay Equity Act – This bipartisan legislation ensures federal firefighters are eligible for the same retirement benefits as other federal first responders, and it adjusts working hours to reflect common non-federal firefighter industry practices. Especially at the Department of Defense, recruitment and retention is growing increasingly difficult for qualified firefighters. Because of the special training required for firefighters who work on military bases and defense installations, they cannot be quickly replaced.

Block Efforts to Implement a New Round of Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC) – A BRAC would lead to the loss of tens of thousands of good jobs and devastate communities across the U.S. NFFE-IAM believes it is premature to approve another round of BRAC until there is a comprehensive and strategic cost-benefit analysis. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report showed that the total cost for implementing the 2005 round of BRAC ballooned from the original estimate of \$21 billion to \$35.1 billion (GAO-12-709R). NFFE-IAM urges Congress to deny BRAC authority until the proper cost-benefit analysis is fully completed.

Repeal and/or Defund Flawed and Discriminatory “Performance-based” Reductions-in-Force (RIF) – We are encouraged by language in the FY 2022 NDAA that gives the Secretary of Defense the flexibility to consider Veterans Preference and seniority in RIFs. NFFE-IAM continues to request the full repeal of Section 1101 of the FY 2016 NDAA which diminished the DoD’s RIF rules for both Veterans Preference and seniority in favor of flawed and biased performance ratings.

Maintain the A-76 Moratorium – This moratorium was put in place after GAO and the DoD Inspector General determined that the DoD could not prove that contracting out provided any cost savings to taxpayers. The A-76 outsourcing cost comparison process has been proven to be flawed, frequently producing inaccurate cost comparisons by double-counting government-performed work. NFFE-IAM asks that the moratorium remain until an honest, full cost-savings analysis is provided to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

Declare Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) jobs inherently governmental – Work that should be performed by Historians, Anthropologists, Geographers, and Archaeologists employed by the DPAA is unlawfully being handed over to contractors and non-profit organizations. DPAA management has done this without pursuing an A-76 study to determine if that work is contractable or if it is cost-efficient to do so. We request that defense authorizers include language in the FY 2025 NDAA declaring these DPAA functions as inherently governmental.



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Stop Criminal and Political Corruption of Project 2025 and Schedule F

Position: The Heritage Foundation's Mandate for Leadership Project 2025 is a blueprint for the corruption of the executive branch on a scale large enough to distort American democracy. Analogous to an organized crime or racketeering scheme, Project 2025 articulates a pattern of systematic engagements on behalf of political and ideological operatives via an embedded clandestine network of presidential appointees. This network employs tactics and people who conceal their activities from law enforcement, regulatory authorities, Congress, and the constitutional obligations of government. Pitched as an ultraconservative prophecy, Project 2025 is little more than a manuscript for a true "deep state" through corruption and hidden agendas. It relies heavily on evading law and exploiting government authority, costing taxpayers billions of dollars each year through appointee salaries and the government programs they corrupt.

Understanding Project 2025: Corrupt Political Forces that Aligned for Mutual Benefit

Project 2025 is set to work like a distraction con: 1) it deliberately creates chaos within the executive branch through an onslaught of extreme, unchecked policies executed by political appointee loyalists, 2) this chaos provides a distraction for other nefarious actors to quietly engage in additional illegal or shady activity. While the public and elected officials are distracted by headlines of extreme religious and nationalist ideologies permeating U.S. government policies and programs (i.e., chaos), covert political operatives loyal to billionaires and other private interests will quietly execute deregulation initiatives and the fleecing of American assets as outlined in Project 2025 by exploiting or violating the law and ignoring the authority of Congress or the courts to intercede.

Project 2025 Installs a Supreme Leader instead of a U.S. President

Project 2025 openly embraces an extreme version of the '*unitary executive theory*' of government, which is a departure from American constitutional democracy. Project 2025 planners state that Congress and the courts have very limited oversight over the president and the executive branch. As such, Project 2025 cedes the president unprecedented, "supreme" powers to intentionally undermine the system of checks and balances and the separation of powers established by the U.S. Constitution.

Project 2025 Employs 'Schedule F' to Enforce Loyalty Oaths and Intimidate Federal Employees

Project 2025 writes throughout that every supreme leader needs an army of underlings who have taken a loyalty oath to the leader instead of the country. To create this army of subjects, Project 2025 relies upon the resurrection of Executive Order 13957, known as Schedule F. Schedule F serves two purposes: 1) to install a limitless number of political appointees *without expirations dates* to work within the Executive Branch as covert operatives loyal to a person or ideology, and 2) to force the transition of tens of thousands of professional apolitical career federal employees into the same political employment status without legitimate access to the Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPP) and the Merit Systems Principles (MSP) that keep government honest, transparent, accountable, and fair. Under Schedule F, professional career federal employees will have no defenses against threats or intimidation from political appointees. Schedule F effectively nullifies the capability and duty of career federal employees to enforce the law or report fraud, waste, abuse, or illegal orders.

A Powerful and Dangerous Executive Branch and Big Government Under Project 2025

Without input or oversight from Congress or the public, Project 2025 cites that operatives are expected to commandeer government authority to weaponize resources against political enemies, improperly influence industries and financial markets, bankrupt public assets, and gain political control over '*inherently governmental functions*' (e.g., as cited: the military, regulatory and law enforcement, trade policies, government contracts, national security, intelligence operations, infrastructure funding, etc.). Political control over *inherently governmental functions* yields incredible power, and it hinders law enforcement to provide Project 2025 operatives with immunity from the law.

Project 2025 and its Corrupt Agenda Against American Democracy

How to Talk to Democrats:

- You will not tolerate Project 2025 government corruption in the executive branch or military.
- You will defend career federal workers—who serve their country in civilian clothes—from Project 2025 political overreach and threats and intimidation by rogue presidential appointees.
- You will keep government programs and services transparent, accountable, and accessible. Project 2025 aims to send funding and resources to those who “support Project 2025 initiatives” and deny those who do not. That is unacceptable, especially with taxpayer dollars.
- You can prove it: 1) your roll call vote on the House 2024 FSGG Schedule F OPM rule defund attempt, 2) you cosponsored HR 1002 / S 399, Saving the Civil Service Act to outlaw Schedule F.

How to Talk to Republicans/Independents:

- This is not a political issue. Project 2025 and Scheule F are about government corruption through rogue, unaccountable political operatives working in the executive branch.
- Project 2025 creates a true deep state. Plans include weaponizing law enforcement, the military, and intelligence resources against whomever they deem as a “political enemy,” foreign or domestic.
- Project 2025 is about installing a supreme leader instead of a president. If that doesn’t scare you, imagine a Democratic Supreme Leader. The political pendulum will swing both ways.
- Project 2025 creates Big Government through an outsized power of the Executive Branch. Project 2025 embraces an executive branch and president strong enough to distort American democracy by offsetting the systems of check and balances against the other two branches of government.

Legislative Remedies:

- Pass the Saving the Civil Service Act (HR 1002 / S 399) to prohibit Schedule F-like authorities.
- Reform the Insurrection Act to prohibit the deployment of armed forces domestically except when all federal, state, and local law enforcement are overwhelmed by violence, to protect public safety and security only.
- Amend the Vacancies Act to prohibit any senate-confirmed political appointee from occupying any other position, including in an acting capacity, unless it follows the Department’s permanent order of succession.
- Prohibit Corruption: Outlaw loyalty oaths except for the official oath of office, outlaw ‘personal or private’ NDAs in government, prohibit non-FACA advisory groups, establish a career-reserved executive (SES) at the deputy secretary rank in each Department for permanent management continuity and policy/ethics enforcement.
- Prohibit Political Overreach: Empower inspectors general to investigate political corruption, save billions of dollars by limiting the number of non-PAS presidential appointees to its original 2000 from the current 4500, enforce qualifications for political hires, mandate comprehensive conflict of interest reporting by political hires, amend the Intergovernmental Personnel Act to prevent its use as a back door for political operative hires.

Political Realities:

- Project 2025 is a creation of religious nationalists and billionaires; each have their own goals. The nationalists want religion as a precipice of American government regardless of the cost to a legitimate democracy, and the billionaires just want government out of their way.
- The American Enterprise Institute published an op-ed against Project 2025 and Schedule F, and many former Republican appointees and elected officials are adamantly against both.
- Only 2 in 10 Americans think the president should have more power to change policy without waiting on Congress or the courts. [*AP-NORC Center for Public Opinion Research poll, 2024*]
- The numbers go up for GOP voters on a GOP president (6 in 10), and likewise for Dem voters on a Dem president (4 in 10), but neither wants an increase in power if the other party is in power. Project 2025 tactics for corruption and political overreach will not apply only to a GOP president. It will apply to any president unless it is stopped.
- The number of federal employees has not changed since 1951, at roughly two million. Since 1951, the American population has more than doubled.
- Federal employees are politically diverse. 32% register as Democratic, 33% register as Republican, 35% register as Independent [*GovExec poll, 2024*]. There is no liberal deep state; the workforce remains apolitical.
- 43% of Americans now identify as Independent; 27% of Americans identify equally as either Democratic or Republican. [*Gallop poll, 2024*]



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NFFE-IAM Supports the Federal Retirement Fairness Act (H.R. 5995)

Position: **81 Democrats and 24 Republicans agree that the ‘buy-back’ bill should pass to restore the option to buy-back temporary and seasonal time to count toward retirement. Many Americans answer the call to serve on behalf of their country by working in the federal government as civil servants. Because the needs of the government change very quickly, it is in the regular course of duty that many workers are hired for seasonal or temporary terms of employment. These seasonal or temporary employees include wildland firefighters during fire season, park rangers during tourist season, civilian personnel to assist the military during special operations, surge programs, agency transitions, and so on.**

Often these workers become permanent full-time federal employees, many with years of seasonal or temporary experience to their name, but they have no way of counting that time toward retirement. Under the Federal Retirement Fairness Act, these workers have the option to ‘buy-back’ their time as a seasonal or temporary employee, paying the normal retirement contributions plus interest back to the government. Because the employee is paying (plus interest) for this time to count toward retirement, the burden to the taxpayer is no more than any other federal employee. NFFE strongly *supports* the bipartisan Federal Retirement Fairness Act.

Over the years, the federal government has used temporary hiring authority to quickly increase the size of its workforce and adapt to fluctuating or short-term requirements in areas such as acquisition and ship maintenance. Many of these dedicated temporary workers ultimately become permanent federal employees and contribute their life’s work to federal service.

Federal employees that began their career as temporary employees are not able to contribute the requisite number of years to draw full retirement benefits after 30 years of service. These dedicated workers then face a choice: leave the federal service without full retirement benefits or work longer than their peers to obtain their full retirement benefits. In places like the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, where people work with their hands, this is a choice between two bad options: Retire without the security you thought you had or put your health at risk by working years longer than the rest of your peers in a physically demanding job.

Until 1989, federal employees with temporary or seasonal time had the option buy back years of retirement contributions to allow for an “on-time” retirement. Unfortunately, that authority expired, leaving folks with no option to obtain full retirement benefits for the years they worked other than continuing to work past their conventional retirement date. Democrats and Republicans agree, it is time to allow this option again.

This problem can be solved with minimal burden to the taxpayer. The Retirement Fairness Act would provide federal employees with the ability to retire on time. Specifically, it would allow interested and eligible employees to make catch-up contributions to their retirement to compensate for the years they worked as temporary employees. It is important that all federal employees have the freedom of choice to retire on time after their years of service. This bill simply ensures that all employees, regardless of their initial hiring status, are granted the same opportunity for the same amount of work as they once could.



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NFFE-IAM and the Department of Veterans Affairs – 118th Congress

Position: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees endure deteriorating working conditions, worsening pay, and political activists attempting to privatize VA care through lies and retaliation. It is critically important that Congress acts quickly to preserve one of the world's best medical and healthcare systems, per 2023 third-party medical studies. Congress itself is responsible for much of the consternation within the VA. Laws were passed that destroyed legitimate transparency and broke processes that protected care providers and veterans from mismanagement, corruption, and inferior outsourced care. Congress must restore a system of checks and balances at the VA to protect veteran care.

VA Employee Fairness Act – Passed in the 117th House, this bill: 1) Restores peer reviews that give VA clinicians and patients a louder voice regarding care, 2) Allows negotiations regarding workplace practices that affect patient safety, working conditions, competitive pay for retention and recruitment, and 3) Improves transparency and accountability by preventing retaliation against VA doctors and nurses who report problems.

- It restores systematic protections against corruption and management malfeasance by removing 38 U.S.C. 7422 created by the failed VA Accountability Act of 2017 (as cited by an I.G. report).
- It holds managers and political appointees accountable for VA operations and veteran care.
- It helps to prevent retaliation, discrimination, and false disciplinary claims against VA professionals.
- It improves the overall transparency, effectiveness, and efficiency of VA care for veterans.

Improve VA & VHA Patient Care and Workforce Efficiencies, Effectiveness, and Competitiveness.

Recently, several poorly written laws have failed veterans by substituting solid health and medical policy for false political soundbites meant to increase outsourcing of veterans' care, even if that care is inferior. The politicians passing these laws see veterans as dollar signs instead of a promise to care for them.

- Pass the VA Correct Compensation Act (H.R. 6538) to allow Title 38 employees to grieve incorrect or inaccurate paychecks.
- Pass the Protecting VA Employees Act (H.R. 4906) to undo the damage caused by the failed Accountability Act of 2017; and restore “substantial evidence” as a standard for discipline.
- Remove Section 101 from pending VA legislation that removes funding from the VA to private providers who are held to a lower standard of care than VA facilities.
- Release the Red Team Report that cites the out of control and expensive spending on private providers and begin hiring for thousands of VA vacancies with qualified federal employees.
- Permanently dismantle the corrupt VA Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection, which is an internal review board for disciplinary actions headed by political appointees. As cited in VA OIG report #18-04968-249, this office improperly blocked third-party review of appeals via MSPB, and broke transparency of veteran care at every level, especially private care providers. It retaliated against VA staff for speaking up, and it ignored reports of bad care by private providers.
- Reform Doctor/Clinician Pay. Like most performance pay, the VA is fraught with farcical metrics, pay inconsistencies, and missing payouts. Instead, Congress should boost base pay complemented by meaningful market pay, specialty pay, and automatic annual COLAs.
- Fortify Mental Health Professionals. Veteran suicide and depression are at record highs. Stop VA Mental Health Professional burnout by untying “book-ability” to performance, allow full bargaining rights for psychiatrists, enhance career development and training, and reform compensation.
- Pass the VA CPE Modernization Act. This bill modernizes continuing education programs in the VA by expanding the types of clinicians who are eligible to receive reimbursement for continuing education and increase the amounts they can receive. Current continuing education allowances were set more than 30 years ago and no longer reflect the requirements of modern medicine.



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, IAMAW, AFL-CIO



NFFE-IAM and Federal Workforce Legislation - 118th Congress

Position: **The foundation of a modern Democracy relies on a fair, effective, efficient, transparent, and apolitical civilian federal government workforce. To maintain and improve upon a modern federal civilian workforce, NFFE-IAM requests that the following legislation be passed to provide for a stable federal workforce that is ready to accept future challenges without fear of reprisal or improper political influence.**

Saving the Civil Service Act (H.R. 1002 / S. 399) – To prohibit Schedule F-like authorities that 1) installs a limitless number of political appointees *without expirations dates* to work within the Executive Branch as covert operatives loyal to a person or ideology, and 2) forces the transition of tens of thousands of professional apolitical career federal employees into the same political employment status without legitimate access to the Prohibited Personnel Practices (PPP) and the Merit Systems Principles (MSP) that keep government honest, transparent, accountable, and fair.

Protect the Civilian Conservation Centers of Job Corps with 1) full funding in FY 2025, 2) increase pay for CCC staff who often make less than fast food employees, and 3) pass the CCC Modernization Act.

LEO Equity/Parity Act (H.R. 1322 / S. 1658) – To provide federal Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) status to uniformed law enforcement personnel of the federal government who serve as a first responder to protect government employees and assets, but do not have the same coverage as other federal law enforcement officers.

Honoring Civil Servants Killed in the Line of Duty Act (H.R. 5883 / S. 3029) – To raises the death gratuity to \$100,000 and the funeral allowance to \$8,800 from the current \$10,000 payment for survivors of fallen federal workers (updated in 1997) and \$800 funeral allowance (updated in 1966).

Equal COLA Act (H.R. 866 / S. 3194) – To achieve parity between the cost-of-living adjustment with respect to an annuity under the Federal Employees Retirement System and an annuity under the Civil Service Retirement System.

End the Tiered FERS Contribution Rates – The federal workforce is subject to an unfair four-tiered pension – with CSRS and three different FERS tiers. Within FERS, employees hired in 2013 are paying 2.3% more and those hired after 2014 are paying 3.6% more with no benefit increase.

Protect Federal Employee Annuities – The current pension calculation for most FERS pension participants is the average of highest three consecutive years of base salary, multiplied by the number of years of service, multiplied by 1% under 20 years of service or 1.1% above. Given that federal pensions have not seen any improvements since passage of the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986, coupled with the erosion of federal pensions for those hired since 2013, NFFE-IAM believes that an increase in the accrual rate from 1.1% to as much as 1.7% is long overdue.

Bust the Pay Cap in General Schedule and Other Pay Systems – Federal workers continue to experience the demoralizing frustration of the salary cap that prevents them from receiving their annual pay increases in high-cost localities and in pay systems that are capped by Executive Schedule Level IV. The resulting pay compression creates a disincentive for qualified and experienced federal workers to continue their careers in the federal government.



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NFFE-IAM Supports the Locality Pay Equity Act (H.R. 6422 / S. 3308)

Position: NFFE-IAM seeks to pass the **Locality Pay Equity Act (H.R. 6422 / S. 3308)** to align the locality pay areas under the antiquated Federal Wage System pay areas to match the General Schedule pay areas.

Federal blue-collar workers' pay is governed by a statutory "prevailing rate" system, known as the Federal Wage System (FWS), that purports to match federal wages with those paid to workers in skilled trades occupations in the private sector. However, that system has never been permitted to function as intended. Instead, annual adjustments have been capped at the average adjustment provided to white collar federal employees under the General Schedule (GS). Prevailing rates are defined in the law as fully equal to market rates paid in the private sector, unlike "comparability" in the white-collar system, which is defined as 95% of market rates.

While the white-collar system uses BLS data to determine non-federal rates and thus the gap between federal and non-federal pay, the blue-collar system relies on surveys conducted by local teams comprised of representatives from the union and from agency management with the largest numbers of blue-collar employees in the local wage area. These local survey teams are prohibited from using any data from local building trades' unions' scales. The data are used to create wage schedules that describe local prevailing rates.

For the past two decades, Congress has added language to appropriations bills that guarantee that blue-collar federal employees receive the same annual adjustments as white-collar coworkers. Although the boundaries of local wage areas are different from General Schedule, the language grants the same annual pay adjustment to all salaried and hourly workers within a given white-collar locality.

This policy of equal annual pay adjustments solves just one inequity between the two systems. The GS locality boundaries are drawn according to commuting rates, which is the proper way to define local labor markets. The **FWS locality or wage area boundaries were drawn mostly in the 1950s**, reflecting the location of large military installations that employed the majority of federal hourly workers at that time.

Today, some GS localities include several FWS wage areas. Thus, while everyone in a given GS locality receives the same annual raise, hourly workers in a given GS locality may receive vastly different base wages. For example, the salaried workers at the Tobyhanna Army Depot in Monroe County, Pennsylvania are paid according to salaries in the New York City locality because, according to Census data on commuting, Monroe County is part of the overall New York City labor market.

Yet the hourly workers there are considered to be in a different local labor market. Hourly and salaried workers at Tobyhanna who work side-by-side in the same place for the same employer and who travel the same roads to get to and from work are treated as though they are in different locations. These unfair pay discrepancies can be resolved with the Locality Pay Equity Act.



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES,



The Fight for American Democracy:

Dispelling Popular Lies and Myths about the Federal Workforce

Position: Most Americans are unaware of the true size and nature of the Federal government. Many would be shocked to hear that the number of Federal employees has grown little since the late 1940's and currently stands at its smallest per capita in history. Unfortunately, some on Capitol Hill tell false tales about the Federal workforce on behalf of others for reasons of political gain or personal enrichment. They seek to cloud American democracy by disabling the foundational tools that keep the Executive Branch accountable and transparent, and free from corruption and political overreach.

The Federal workforce size is the same as it was in 1952 and is its smallest ever per capita.

The non-postal Federal civilian workforce is the same size now (approximately 2 million) as it was in 1952. Per capita, Federal employees represent the lowest number ever (.597%) from a record high in the late 1940s (1.85%). In contrast, the contractor workforce has expanded to more than 4 million workers. Nearly 40% of all discretionary tax dollars, more than \$700 billion annually, goes to private contractors and Taxpayer-funded corporate profits. Per the CBO, the Federal workforce—including benefits—costs less than one-third of the contractor workforce. Plus, Federal employees pay their taxes, so Federal employee wages go to the Treasury, not corporate coffers.

10,000 Federal employees are terminated for-cause each year.

A common falsehood often told by some on Capitol Hill is that Federal employees are “impossible” to fire. Each year, approximately 10,000 Federal employees are terminated for-cause (conduct or poor performance)ⁱ. This equates to approximately 40 involuntary terminations for cause per workday, or .5% of the workforce annually.

The Federal employee termination rate is HIGHER than the private sector.

The involuntary separations (terminations) rate in the private sector is 1% annuallyⁱⁱ. Of that 1%, about one-third are terminations for-cause and two-thirds are layoffsⁱⁱⁱ. This means that the termination rate for-cause in the private sector is .33%. The Federal government's termination rate for cause is higher at .5%. Detractors claim that Merit System Principles hinder the firing of Federal employees. They claim Federal unions do the same. Clearly, this is false. Merit System Principles buttress accountability throughout the government by deterring political overreach, corruption, poor management, and unfair practices without affecting employee termination rates.

The truth behind the MSPB and the FLRA, and the foolish effort to eliminate both.

Federal employees prevail only 18% of the time at the MSPB and only 3% of the time upon appeal to the full board. Management prevails 60% of the time against unions at the FLRA. Some in Congress argue these agencies favor employees. That claim is a lie, yet some in Congress block funding and qualified nominees to weaken these agencies and the Federal case law that protects the Executive Branch from political abuse and corruption (personal bias, favoritism, improper contracting, Schedule F “loyalty” employment, the Spoils system, etc.).

Why the war by some in Congress against Federal employee labor organizations?

Federal employees do not have to pay union dues, they cannot strike or bargain for pay or benefits, they put their duty before politics, they vote equally between Democratic and Independent and Republican; so why the hostilities toward Federal unions from some in Congress? The truth is that Federal unions are the eyes and ears across government. Federal union members are often the first to uncover unethical or illegal activities. For the politically or criminally corrupt, Federal unions are a threat to their unethical ways and criminal activity.

ⁱ [Fedscope.opm.gov](https://www.opm.gov); Termination or Removal for Discipline or Performance, FY 2005 to FY 2023.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, May 31). *Table 5. layoffs and discharges levels and rates by industry and region, seasonally adjusted - 2023 M04 results*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.t05.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ Trevor, C., & Piyanontalee, R. (n.d.). *Discharges, poor-performer quits, and layoffs as valued exits: Is it ...* Annual Reviews. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012119-045343>