



# **AFGE** Congressional Testimony

**STATEMENT BY**

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**ON**

**A MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT:  
CULTIVATING THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee: My name is J. David Cox and I am the National President of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE). On behalf of the more than 650,000 federal and District of Columbia workers our union represents, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The subject of this hearing is broad, and I was asked to address issues ranging from the impact of the past several years of anti-federal employee policies to the state of the federal workforce with respect to morale, recruitment and retention, and productivity and efficiency. It is clear that there can be no real separation between these two sets of issues, as one is a direct consequence of the other.

## **The Economic Attacks on the Federal Workforce**

Starting with the three year pay freeze initiated by President Obama which first took effect in 2010, these years have been relentlessly and unjustifiably harsh toward federal employees and their families. The rationale for freezing federal pay in 2010, you may recall, was based on two profoundly misguided notions. The President believed that he could appease his political enemies by imposing pain on a group his enemies disdained; he seemed to hope that by inflicting economic hardship on a group despised by his opponents, the opponents might be more open to compromise on issues important to their favored constituents. Of course, those compromises never materialized.

The second misguided notion that the President used to justify the pay freeze was that since so many middle and working class Americans were experiencing economic pain as a result of the bursting of the housing bubble and the ensuing financial crisis, federal employees should feel pain as well. Although it is arguably the responsibility of the President to promote the well-being of the working and middle class, in this case, the goal was to impose hardship. Expanding pain rather than alleviating it.

Then what started as a two-year pay freeze grew into three years. As was inevitable, the President's political opponents were neither appeased nor moved to compromise. The only effect was economic hardship for federal employees and their families and a sense of having been sacrificed for nothing. And yet, the pay freeze turned out to be only the beginning.

In February 2010, President Obama issued an Executive Order that established the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, now referred to as the Simpson-Bowles Commission, again as an attempt to appease his political enemies. The report issued by the commission, which did not receive sufficient support from its members to be formally submitted to Congress, contained numerous proposals to reduce the compensation of federal employees. One of the most ruinous, which derived from a deeply flawed recommendation developed by the Third Way think tank, was to impose drastic reductions in federal employees' retirement benefits. The proposal was developed using false assumptions and faulty logic. But that did not impede its progress: it was the basis for taxing federal employees hired in 2013 an extra 2.3 percent of salary to fund an extension of unemployment insurance. (This tax

increase/salary reduction is permanent even though the extension of unemployment insurance was temporary.) And it was the basis for the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013's imposition of an additional tax increase/salary reduction on federal employees hired starting in 2014. These new employees' salaries will be 3.6 percent lower than those hired prior to 2013 and 1.3 percent lower than those hired in 2013.

The pay freezes and the retirement cuts are outrageous because they are unnecessary, they are contrary to the principles which form the basis for the laws governing federal pay and federal retirement benefits, and they are based on false claims by the Third Way authors of the proposal which found its way into the Simpson-Bowles Commission's failed report. Laws governing federal employee pay, federal employee pensions, and federal employee health benefits are also based on the principle of comparability with private sector practice. The federal government has sought to follow the practice of large private sector and state and local government employers. All the recent cuts to pay and retirement, however, mark a departure from the principle of private sector comparability.

The cuts to federal retirement have been an egregious violation of the principle of private sector comparability. Ninety-six percent of private sector defined benefit plans do not charge employees one red cent for their benefit according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In cases where state and local governments charge employees for their defined benefit plans, it is almost always because they do not participate in Social Security. But the Third Way/Simpson Bowles proposal claimed that charging federal employees for fully half the cost of their defined benefit, including those in the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) who pay 6.2 percent of their salaries into Social Security, would bring them in line with private sector practice. A horrible policy based on false assertions has made its way forward, and if it is not modified or repealed, it will impoverish an entire generation of federal employees. It should be noted here that Representative Paul Ryan's budgets for both this year and last contain the full Third Way/Simpson Bowles proposal, which would reduce salaries for all federal employees by 5.5 percent across-the-board.

On wages and salaries, the departure from private sector comparability has been even more extreme. The pay freezes have only increased the amount by which federal salaries lag behind those in the private sector and state and local government. Each year the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) calculates pay gaps between the federal government's salaries and the salaries paid in the private sector and state and local government on a city-by-city and job-by-job basis using data from BLS. In spite of an ongoing campaign to discredit the findings of OPM and BLS by various right-wing "think tanks" and news outlets, the data tell a consistent story. Comparing salaries for the actual jobs performed by federal employees with the salaries paid by private employers (and state and local government employers) who employ workers in the same jobs shows federal salaries are an average of 35% lower. The size of this pay gap grew during the period of the pay freeze and will continue to grow this year because private sector salaries will have grown by more than 1% in this year and last.

If declining salaries and retirement benefits were not enough, federal employees have also been victimized by the consequences of the Budget Control Act of 2011. After that Act's sequestration provisions went into effect, hundreds of thousands of federal employees were laid off for as many as six days in the summer of 2013. It was during the sequestration lay-offs that the real impact of the pay freeze and retirement cuts was made apparent. The loss of one week's or even a few days' pay was enough to send many federal workers into full-blown economic crisis.

I often thought during that time that if the purpose of the pay freeze was to extend the pain of the recession, to hurt working class Americans who happened to be employed by the Department of Defense or some other agency of the federal government the way other American workers had been hurt, then it was a rousing success. AFGE's telephones rang off the hooks with members calling about falling behind on the rent or the mortgage, being on the verge of having their cars repossessed, and not being able to make their child support payments. Worst were the calls from those in danger of losing their jobs because falling behind on bills threatened their security clearances. So we had children doing without support, workers losing the cars they depended on to get to the job, and breadwinners threatened with unemployment because their employer was locking them out of their jobs.

Then came the government shutdown. The federal employees whose pay had been frozen for three years out of political cynicism, whose retirement benefits had been cut out of a combination of political expediency, cruelty and ignorance; and who had just withstood up to six days of layoffs were now locked out of work because one group in Congress did not want uninsured Americans to have access to affordable health care.

While Congress and the President did agree to backpay for all federal employees affected by the shutdown/lockout, it would be highly inaccurate to say that all were made whole. For the hundreds of thousands of federal employees who have no savings and live paycheck to paycheck, the delay in receipt of their paychecks had real consequences. Whether they had to buy groceries with a high-interest credit card, had to pawn valuables, or whether they actually fell behind on rent, car payments, daycare, child support, or other obligations; the delayed paycheck coming so soon after the reduced paychecks from sequestration furloughs put them over the edge. I heard from parents who lost their daycare slots, families who were evicted from their apartments, workers whose cars were repossessed. These are real people who suffered real harm, not pawns on a political chess board, and the leaders who were elected to represent them, had let them down.

### **Workforce Morale in the Face of Relentless Attacks**

How could morale be anything other than extremely low under these circumstances? The answer is that federal employees are a devoted and resilient bunch. They despise what the politicians have done to them. Even those whose retirement benefits have not been cut are outraged that the next generation – their children and grandchildren – will receive substantially lower compensation for doing the same jobs that they have

performed if these cuts are not repealed, the opposite of the American Dream of progress for each generation. They are still paying off debts incurred from sequestration and the delayed paychecks of the shutdown. They are furious that their employer holds them in such low regard. They are sick and tired of simultaneously being Congress' and the Administration's punching bag and ATM. But they love their country, they love their jobs and they are devoted to the missions of their agencies.

Wherever I go, I hear the same story. The anger over cuts to their compensation is massive, but the first concern of Border Patrol Agents is protecting Americans from drug smugglers, human traffickers, and other illegal crossings. The first concern of everybody working at a Veterans' Administration hospital is the welfare of wounded warriors. The first concern at our military installations is that the troops are well equipped and readiness is assured. The first concern at FEMA, TSA, and ICE is getting the job done for the American people. The first concern of our Social Security Administration members is that Americans receive all the benefits they have earned and paid for. The first concern of Corrections Officers is that our communities are protected from the dangerous criminals they guard in our federal prisons. And the first concern of USDA meat and poultry inspectors is that Americans have safe food to eat.

### **Efficiency vs. Effectiveness in the Wake of the Budget Control Act**

The American people are lucky to have such devotion on the part of the federal workforce after four and a half years of relentless attacks. And I am so proud to serve as the president of the largest federal employee union. But as devoted as federal employees are, the budget policies of this era are making it all but impossible for this workforce to keep up productivity and efficiency. And while productivity and efficiency are important measures for any undertaking, whether it be a non-profit or a business, it is sometimes the case that efficiency and effectiveness are at odds.

Last month I spent several days along the U.S.-Mexico border with members of AFGE's National Border Patrol Council. Time and again, they described cases where the goal of border security and the goal of economic efficiency were in conflict. In short, the agency was rewarding managers for cutting costs, even where cost-cutting meant reductions in border security. So when I read in your invitation to testify that you wanted me to address the productivity and efficiency of the federal workforce, my mind went immediately to this important area. Do Border Patrol Agents do an outstanding job of securing the border? Yes. They perform an extraordinarily challenging, dangerous, and complex set of duties and do so under the most difficult circumstances.

But the agency is highly focused on efficiency and cost reduction, and some improvements in efficiency are coming at the cost of mission. Securing the border is not the same as maximizing profit in a widget factory. The same logic should not apply. So while I can assure you that Border Patrol Agents are as angry about the pay freezes, retirement cuts, and budget cuts that threaten their overtime pay eligibility as anyone would be, they keep a laser-focus on border security. And their biggest complaint is that their managers' performance bonuses are based on saving money, not on the

number of arrests or amount of illegal drugs confiscated from smugglers or other measures of security. Efficiency, not effectiveness, seems to be the priority, and border security suffers.

Mr. Chairman and Senator McCain, let me thank you for your leadership and introduction of S. 1691, the Border Patrol Pay Reform Act. Passage of this bill is crucial for the agency's ability to continue full coverage of the border and for stability and fairness in pay for Border Patrol Agents. AFGE greatly appreciates your support of this legislation.

The same issue has emerged at the Department of Agriculture with its proposal to replace government inspectors with company employees and increase the speed of the line to 175 birds per minute. Yes, this would save the USDA \$90 million over three years and increase poultry profits by hundreds of millions of dollars. But the safety of the food supply would be sacrificed in the bargain. Again, efficiency over effectiveness and public health suffers.

I see the same thing in Veterans' Hospitals. The VA's own handbook says that a physician should have no more than 1,200 patients, and the same standard has been extended to other independent providers such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other health care providers. These standards exist to promote quality of care, so that patients are able, in a timely fashion, to obtain appointments for follow-up or preventive care. They also exist so that providers can monitor patients to make sure their conditions are not deteriorating or that medications are having the desired effect. But AFGE members tell me that caseloads for psychiatrists and other primary care physicians now routinely exceed 2,000 patients. And this can have a devastating impact on our veterans. When veterans with conditions ranging from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to diabetes are not able to get in to see their doctors, we all know how tragic the consequences can be. Similar situations occur for those in need of physical therapy follow-up appointments. And like Border Patrol and the USDA, the Veterans Health Administration has increasingly placed efficiency over the health and welfare of veterans. Higher caseloads for primary care providers may be efficient, but the sacred mission of the VA is being sacrificed in the process.

### **One Bright Spot for Federal Pay and a Threat to Extinguish It**

Last month, OPM published a report entitled "*Governmentwide Strategy on Advancing Pay Equality in the Federal Government.*" It is the most informative, objective, and important examination of the federal pay system published by any entity in several years and deserves close attention, especially in light of the fanfare given over to so many extremely tendentious "studies" of federal pay from conservative think tanks. The OPM report was prepared in response to the President's request for a gender pay-equity analysis of federal pay systems that paid close attention to the General Schedule's classification system and its transparency. The President also asked for recommendations for administrative or legislative action that would promote "best practices" that were found to minimize inequities.

Although the report focused on just one outcome of the federal pay system – its success in advancing gender pay equity – the study provides important insight into the General Schedule system’s strengths as a whole. Any pay and job classification system must be judged on attributes such as internal and external equity, as well as transparency and effectiveness. External equity refers to whether a pay system meets market standards. We know that the General Schedule fails the external equity test, but not because of any kind of systemic flaw but rather because successive Congresses and administrations have not funded it even before the pay freezes. We have the annual reports of the Federal Salary Council since 1995 to prove that.

But this OPM report on one aspect of internal equity, gender equity, is extremely telling. It compares data on federal employment over the past two decades and finds great progress on the part of women in ascending to higher-graded positions. But the most important finding was that *there is no significant gender pay difference by grade level among GS workers*. That is, at each pay grade, there was no real difference between the salaries paid to women and men doing the same jobs. This is a great virtue of the federal pay system.

The study showed that, depending on the methodology used, from 76 to 93 percent of the observed pay gap between federally employed men and women is attributable to women being concentrated in lower-graded occupations. Indeed, the only real observed inequities arose where managerial discretion operates, such as in the awarding of quality step increases, promotions, and starting salaries. While women are more frequent recipients of promotions and quality step increases, managers have exercised discretion in providing higher starting salaries to men. But even starting salaries were mostly equivalent; it was in just four occupational categories that male starting salaries exceeded those provided to women by more than ten percent. Among members of the non-General Schedule Senior Executive Service, women’s salaries were 99.2 percent of men’s, a remarkable achievement.

These findings constitute a ringing endorsement of the current pay system, a system that assigns salaries to the position, not the individual. In the jargon of pay-setting, the General Schedule is oriented more toward a “rank-in-position” rather than a “rank-in-person.” And that orientation is the secret to having a pay system that avoids discrimination.

The federal government’s disastrous experience with the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) in the Department of Defense during the George W. Bush administration is a cautionary tale on the dangers of abandoning an objective “rank-in-position” system like the General Schedule for federal agencies. From 2006 to 2009, 225,000 civilian workers in DoD were subject to a system that based salaries and annual salary adjustments on supervisors’ assessments of employee performance. NSPS also granted managers tremendous “flexibility” on classification of jobs, hiring, assignments, promotion, tenure, and “performance management.” The system’s only additional funding relative to the General Schedule payroll base was for outside

consultants who had a large role in designing, implementing, and training DoD managers in their new system.

It was not surprising that even in its brief three-year reign, NSPS damaged the federal government's excellent record of internal equity on race and gender. Data on salaries, performance ratings, and bonuses showed marked advantages to being white and male, and working in close geographic proximity to the Pentagon. Those in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service and Tricare were found to be higher performers, on average, than civilian employees in the Departments of the Army, Navy or Air Force.

NSPS was a system conceived in a highly politicized context. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had been established two years earlier, in 2002, and its secretary was granted broad personnel authorities, construed by the agency to include the right to unilaterally abrogate provisions of collective bargaining agreements and replace them with agency directives. The rationale for DHS' grant of authority to create a new pay and personnel system was the war on terror and the administration's belief that union rights and national security were mutually exclusive. So two years later in 2004, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld used the same rationale to seek personnel authorities similar to those granted to the Secretary of Homeland Security.

The Department of Homeland Security's personnel system, named MaxHR, never really got off the ground, thanks to a lawsuit that successfully argued that its undermining of collective bargaining rights violated the law. But NSPS did move forward in part because its focus was not on eliminating the union *per se*, but rather on creating a pay system that allowed managers to reward themselves and their cronies, and punish others. NSPS could only have continued if Congress had been indifferent to its discriminatory outcomes. Fortunately, when faced with data that showed NSPS gave systemic advantages to white employees and other relatively powerful groups at the direct expense of other DoD civilians, and that the venerated Merit System Principles had been undermined, Congress voted to repeal the system in 2009.

But the architects of NSPS have not given up the dream of a subjective pay system for the federal government, one in which managers can decide each employee's salary and whether and by how much that salary will be adjusted each year. The most recent attempt to revive NSPS came this spring, when the contractor Booz Allen Hamilton (\$5.76 billion in revenue in 2013, 98 percent of which is from the federal government) endowed the publication of a report under the imprimatur of the Partnership for Public Service.

The report trods the well-worn path of those seeking lucrative contracts to revamp the federal personnel system. It employs the hackneyed tropes that have become all too familiar: the General Schedule is "stuck in the past," "broken," "rigid," and "fragmented." They conveniently neglect to acknowledge the fact that numerous flexibilities and modernizations have been enacted over the past few decades. In the 1990's, the General Schedule went from having one nationwide annual cost-of-living adjustment to



a city-by-city, labor market-by-labor market cost-of-labor salary adjustment system. Special rates were authorized as well. In the 2000's, Congress passed legislation that introduced broad new hiring authorities, managerial flexibilities in salary-setting, and a program for substantial bonuses for recruitment, relocation, and retention. Congress enacted legislation to allow student-loan repayment, new personnel system demonstration projects, and phased retirement. The list of new flexibilities is long, and in many cases, these new authorities have improved the General Schedule. In any case, the list stands as a refutation of the myth that the General Schedule is a relic, untouched by modernity or that Congress has failed to address needed changes in the civil service system for decades on end.

Congress has been careful, however, not to go so far as to undermine the Merit System. Unlike a private firm, the federal government is spending the public's money in ways that are meant to promote the public interest. NSPS was an object lesson in what happens when the Booz Allen Hamilton plan is implemented in a federal agency. Despite good intentions, the Merit System Principles are undermined, particularly the principles that promise "equal pay for work of substantially equal value," and that "employees be protected against arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes." Veterans Preference in hiring, retention and promotions is also inevitably undermined. These are the lessons of NSPS.

We know that the Booz Allen Hamilton plan assumes dramatic increases in funding for federal pay so that no one would be any worse off than they would be with the protections of the General Schedule. As naïve and unrealistic as this assumption is, it is also based on a profound misunderstanding of the Merit System Principles. It is not enough to ensure that no one would be worse off. It remains wrong to distribute the system's hoped-for additional monies in a way that favors some demographic groups over others on the flimsy grounds of a manager's assessment of performance. In the public sector, there is too much risk of political favoritism, and too much risk that unconscious bias will result in greater rewards for those with good connections or the preferred gender or skin color. And the General Schedule's pay and classification system, as the most recent OPM report amply demonstrates, bests the private sector and any other type of split, "rank-in-person" system on equity time and again.

I do not wish to suggest that the Partnership advocates discrimination. We all know that its intentions are fine. But we also know that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, and AFGE has no desire to revisit the hell of NSPS. And there is no dispute that the blueprint Booz Allen Hamilton has submitted is not just cut from the same cloth as NSPS, it is NSPS *redux*.

While NSPS and its would-be successors fail the internal equity test, there is no question that when it comes to external equity, Congress and the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations have all failed to perform their role. It is preposterous to blame the current system for failing to produce external equity. External equity is a funding issue, and the General Schedule cannot fund itself. It relies on budget authority and appropriations. To pretend that Congress would magically provide billions more each

year to fund a new civil service system identical to one it repealed in 2009 on the grounds that it was discriminatory is folly.

The cost of living has risen 8 percent from 2010 to the present, a period which includes the three years of frozen federal pay plus this year's one percent adjustment. So even before the salary reductions for new employees of 1.3 percent and 3.6 percent, the purchasing power of federal salaries had declined by 7 percent. The degree to which they lag the market varies by city, but the nationwide average is 35.37 percent according to the most recent estimates from OPM, using data from BLS. And that number includes current locality payments which have been frozen for four, long years.

### **Inequality, the Decline of the American Middle Class, and the Compensation of Federal Employees**

The decline in living standards for America's middle class and the ongoing misery of the poor have been much in the news recently. On one side are those who deny the numbers, attribute changes in the distribution of income and wealth to changes in educational attainment or willingness to exert effort. On another side are those who recognize that the decline of unions, the rise of outsourcing and global free trade agreements, and the deregulation of the 1990's and other factors are better explanations. Median incomes for middle class American families, adjusted for inflation, are lower than they were in the 1970's and the very rich have benefited so disproportionately from economic growth over the decades that America is now more unequal than it was in the 1920's. Last week, the *New York Times* reported that both middle incomes and the incomes of the poor were higher in several European countries and Canada than they are in the US, and that after adjusting for inflation, median per capita income in the US has not improved at all since 2000.

Federal employees are typical middle class Americans. They work hard and have historically received modest, but fair pay from their employer. It has been recognized that the nation benefited from having an apolitical civil service governed by the merit system principles. The pay and benefits that derived from those principles were supposed to be adequate to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce, capable of carrying out important public sector functions, from law enforcement to guaranteeing care for wounded warriors to protecting public health.

The government would not be a bottom-of-the-barrel employer, paying the lowest possible wages and forgoing health care and retirement benefits, like so many of today's most profitable corporations. Likewise, the government would not be a place where anybody went to get rich at taxpayer's expense (that role is assumed by government contractors). The government as an employer would be a model when it came to ideals of internal equity and non-discrimination, promoting both fairness and seeking employees devoted to the public interest. And on pay and benefits, it would aim at "comparability," defined in the pay law as no less than 95 percent of what private and state and local government pays on a locality basis.

While some brave politicians have held fast to these principles over the past several years when there has been immense political pressure to reduce government spending no matter what, many more have succumbed to the notion that America should reconcile itself to declining living standards for all but the very rich. As such, they have supported the pay freeze for federal workers, which has cut the purchasing power of a federal paycheck by 7 percent, the retirement benefit cuts, which have cut purchasing power of some federal paychecks by an additional 2.3 or 3.6 percent; and they have supported the Budget Control Act's discretionary spending caps, which have meant temporary layoffs and could mean permanent job loss for thousands.

We recognize how pernicious are the politics behind the pressure to constantly reduce federal spending. We understand the vast power of those who would protect the low tax rates of the wealthy at any cost. And that is but one reason why any move toward fundamental civil service change, particularly changes to the federal pay system, are so ill-timed. One should oppose the Booz Allen Hamilton plan because it introduces subjectivity and politicization into federal pay and undermines veterans' preference and the merit system principles. But one should also oppose the plan because it reallocates salary dollars away from the lower grades toward the top, increasing inequality and decreasing opportunity for advancement. Even if the direct attacks on federal employees' pensions were to stop and funding for salaries were enhanced, it would be important to reject the Booz Allen Hamilton approach, because it quite explicitly introduces greater inequality between the top and the bottom of the federal pay scale.

Indeed, the elitism of the Booz Allen Hamilton plan is striking. It ignores the federal government's hourly workforce altogether. Apparently blue collar workers are so bereft of the qualities it wants to reward in its performance pay scheme that they are not worth notice. The plan's segmentation of the General Schedule or salaried workforce is also highly elitist. Employees in the lower grades, like hourly workers, are excluded entirely, again because, presumably, trying to measure their contribution to excellence would be a pointless exercise. But excluding the lowest paid federal workers is only one part of the inequality enhancement exercise that Booz Allen Hamilton proposes for the government. Like its NSPS forbearer, the plan would divide the workforce by occupational category, reserving the highest raises for the highest earners. Those in the midlevel occupations would stagnate or decline, while their betters would be provided with both higher salary increases and a larger pool of funds from which to draw performance-based adjustments.

The Booz Allen Hamilton plan should also be opposed because it can only undo the tremendous achievement of the current system with respect to eliminating discrimination in pay. I urge you to treat the findings of the OPM study on pay equity as important accomplishments worth protecting. We should be celebrating this success, not considering replacing the system that produced it. And that celebration must include full funding, so that federal employees can restore their status in the middle class.

Sometimes the terms middle class and working class are used interchangeably, but to me, being middle class means earning enough to accumulate savings, to have an economic cushion that allows a family to maintain living standards in hard times or indulge in a vacation or a new car from time to time. These past few years have shown me how few of the 650,000 federal and District of Columbia workers AFGE represents have that kind of economic cushion. And the reason they don't have it is not because they have spent extravagantly. It is because their salaries have not kept up with the cost of living or even with the salaries of their neighbors. They are sliding further down the income scale, and it is because of pay freezes, the Budget Control Act's sequestration, and the absence of political will to stop the slide.

I ask you to restore and protect this slice of America's working and middle class over whom you have such direct control. I urge you to introduce a Senate version of the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act, introduced in the House by Representatives Connolly, Cummings, Cartwright, Tierney, Moran and Lujan-Grisham, which would provide a 3.3 percent salary adjustment to federal employees in 2015. In addition, I ask you to repeal the needless tax increases on federal employees hired in 2013 and 2014. And please put the Booz Allen Hamilton pay plan on the shelf behind where some old budget and NSPS documents are collecting dust. There is no reason to keep on hurting federal workers and their families. Enough is enough.

That concludes my statement, Mr. Chairman. I am happy to respond to any questions.