

WASHINGTON, DC – The full House Appropriations Committee included a Federal Employee Pay Parity amendment in the FY 2006 Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development bill today. The amendment was offered by Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and was cosponsored by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, including Reps. Frank Wolf (R-VA), Jim Moran (D-VA), and Tom Davis (R-VA). The amendment provides for a 3.1% pay adjustment for federal civilian employees, including blue collar employees, giving them pay parity with military employees.

“Military personnel and federal civilian employees work side-by-side and for the same employer,” said Mr. Hoyer. “Our nation is able to deploy our air, sea and land fleets safely and swiftly thanks to the muscle and logistical support of both federal civilian employees and military employees. So it is appropriate to provide them with equal pay adjustments. In addition, a fair pay adjustment is needed to keep pace with private sector salaries so the federal government can compete for quality employees.”

The Hoyer-Wolf-Moran amendment reflects the conviction, repeatedly endorsed by Congress over the last twenty years, that compensation for civilian federal employees must be sufficient to support efforts to recruit and retain the best employees. As an increasing number of employees become eligible for retirement, the government must have the ability to hire quality employees to avert a human capital crisis.

In addition, the civilian public-private sector wage gap has been calculated to be as high as 32% in some areas of the country. If that wage gap continues to grow, it could undermine the federal government’s ability to attract and retain talented people whose interest in public service may be dampened by financial obligations, such as student loans and families. The Hoyer-Wolf-Moran amendment is an effort to prevent this gap from widening.

“Until Congress and the White House agree on a compensation system that accurately values the work of federal civilian employees compared to the work performed by their private sector counterparts, every effort must be made to prevent the wage gap from widening,” said Hoyer. “Pay parity is one key way of accomplishing that goal.”

Under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA), signed into law in 1990, all federal GS employees in 2006 should receive a 13.80% increase next year to federal employees in order to achieve comparability with private sector salaries: (1) an across the board 2.1% increase, as measured by the Employment Cost Index, and (2) an average 11.7%

locality pay adjustment. Budget deficits may preclude a pay adjustment at the rate dictated by FEPCA but a 3.1% pay increase is necessary to keep pace with the private sector.

“I have fought for pay parity for federal civilian employees over the strong objections of the Bush White House for four years, and I will fight again this year until federal employees receive the pay adjustment that they deserve,” said Hoyer.

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