

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) praised the Appropriations Committee’s approval of a 3.5 percent pay adjustment for civilian federal employees, an amount that is equal to the adjustment already approved for members of the military in the FY08 Defense Authorization Act. Hoyer, a long-time advocate of pay parity for federal employees, has been working with Committee leaders to ensure the civilian pay adjustment matches the amount approved for the military. The House is expected to consider the Financial Services Appropriations bill next week.

“A priority when House Democrats assumed the majority last January was to defend and promote the principle of pay parity,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “With this evening’s action by the House Appropriations Committee to provide a 3.5 percent increase to Federal civilians, House Democrats are making good on that priority. I am proud, after 12 years of leading the defense in the House for civilian employees, to go on the offense this year.”

Under previous Republican-led Congresses, Rep. Hoyer, who served on the Appropriations Committee, traditionally offered an amendment during the full committee mark-up. This was the first year pay parity was included in the original mark.

“Pay parity is a simple matter of fairness as well as a critical recruiting and retention tool for the federal government,” said Rep. Hoyer. “It reflects the conviction that compensation for civilian federal employees must be sufficient to support efforts to attract 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.”

The 3.5 percent adjustment for the civilian federal workforce matches the increase approved by the House Armed Services Committee for members of the military – an adjustment which is greater than the three percent the Bush Administration requested in its FY08 budget proposal for both military and civilian employees. In a recently released statement of administration policy, the White House laid out its objections to the 3.5 percent adjustment for military personnel, calling it “unnecessary.”

“The men and women who proudly serve our nation during a time of war - whether on the battlefield or at the Department of Defense - deserve nothing less than a fair pay adjustment that reflects the significant contributions they make to the progress of this nation,” stated Hoyer. “Federal employees provide a myriad of critical services, from researching treatments for deadly diseases at the NIH to providing health care services to our nation’s veterans. This pay

adjustment rewards them for their commitment and dedication to serving all of America's citizens."

This year's pay adjustment for civilian workers of 2.2 percent on average is the smallest rise in recent years, underscoring the importance of the 3.5 percent approved by the Appropriations Committee for next year. Earlier this year, Rep. Hoyer led a bipartisan letter to President Bush from Washington-area House members calling for parity in the 2008 pay adjustments for both military and civilian federal employees. The Bush Administration implicitly endorsed the concept of pay parity for military and civilian employees in its FY08 budget by proposing the same increase for both classifications of federal employees.

"Pay parity also recognizes that the pay for civilian and military employees simply has not kept pace with increases in the private sector," stated Hoyer. "I will continue to work with to secure a fair pay adjustment for federal employees in recognition of their service to our country."

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a 32-percent pay gap exists between the civilian employees and their private sector counterparts in some parts of the nation, and an estimated 10-percent gap exists between the military service members and the private sector.

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