

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) vowed today to fight for federal employee pay parity after President Bush proposed varying pay adjustments for military and civilian government workers (3.4 percent and 2.9 percent respectively). The levels were included in the President's 2009 budget proposal sent to Congress this morning.

"It is indefensible that the administration would propose a sharply lower adjustment for Federal civilian workers than for uniformed personnel serving in non-combat conditions," stated Hoyer. "The proposed 2.9 percent is simply insufficient to ensure that civilian employees receive a fair base increase in 2009 as well as additional adjustments - where necessary - to reflect their employment in expensive regions of the United States."

Hoyer continued, "Federal civilian employees work side-by-side with members of the armed services to protect our nation and keep our government operating as one of the best in the world. The President's budget, with varying pay adjustments for civilian workers and military personnel, is an affront to the long-standing and bipartisan-supported principle of pay parity that recognizes the equally valuable contributions of all federal employees make. This is unacceptable and will not stand."

Last week, Rep. Hoyer organized a bipartisan letter to President Bush, signed by nine other Washington-area Representatives, urging equal pay adjustments for the civil service and the military in his 2009 budget. Hoyer has said providing the same average annual salary adjustments for uniformed personnel and federal civilian employees has enjoyed strong bipartisan support for several years because it is the only way, short of following the 1990 Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act, of preventing the vast compensation gap that exists between public and private sector salaries from widening.

"The Washington-area delegation works hard every year to provide federal employees with a pay adjustment that follows the principle of pay parity and recognizes the vital contributions of the federal workforce," said Hoyer. "We were successful last year in securing an equal and fair adjustment for all sectors of the federal workforce, and we will fight to ensure that the long-standing tradition of pay parity prevails in this year's budget."

In the weeks ahead, Hoyer said he intends to investigate the adequacy of next year's proposed salary adjustment, consulting with respected members of the House Armed Services

Committee, Government Reform Committee, as well as representatives of the military and federal civilian workforce.

“We will need to assess this proposal in the context of the long-term impact of recent adjustment levels on an already significant pay gap between federal employees and their private sector counterparts,” aid Hoyer. “As the budget process moves forward, I intend to look very closely at the proposal and consider it in terms of what is fair in compensating our federal workforce for the vital services they provide.”

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