



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES,
IAMAW, AFL-CIO



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 government accountable and transparent. They seek also to adulterate policies that keep the Executive Branch free from corruption and political overreach.

The federal workforce has not grown since 1951 and is its smallest ever per capita.

In raw numbers, the federal civilian workforce is the same size now (approximately 2 million) as it was in 1952 after the WWII downsizing from 2.6 million employees. Per capita, Federal employees are at the lowest number ever (.597%) when compared to the population of the U.S. from a record high in the late 1940s (1.85%). By contrast, the contractor workforce has expanded to more than 4 million workers. Nearly 40% of all discretionary tax dollars now go to private entities totaling more than \$600 billion annually. Per CBO, the entire federal workforce costs less than a third of contract costs. Plus, federal employees pay their taxes, so federal wages go back to the Treasury instead of 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). This equates to approximately 40 involuntary terminations for cause per workday.

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 they 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, Schedule F "loyalty" employment, 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, federal employees' politics extend equally to both parties, unions do not protect poor performers (*see above*), and most federal unions get along with management. So why the hostilities toward federal unions from some in Congress? The truth is that federal unions are the eyes and ears across government. Often unions and their members are the first to uncover efforts to diminish the effect of laws and regulations that keep government fair, efficient, effective, and honest. Federal unions promote transparency while enforcing accountability. For those who plan to corrupt the Executive Branch criminally or politically, federal labor organizations are a big problem.



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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.