



Chapter 67

Peoples Voice

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FEDERAL PAY VS PRIVATE SECTOR PAY

Federal employees are earning much less than their private-sector counterparts, according to new statistics provided by a presidentially-appointed group of experts on pay and labor relations.

The Federal Salary Council (FSC) which consists of three experts in labor relations and pay policy as well as six others who represent federal employee organizations met to discuss the steep pay gap in mid-October. The gap grew by 8.3 percent over the past year, revealing that Feds earn 34.6 percent less, on average, than workers in the private sector, according to one member of the FSC.

The FSC acknowledged that there also have been changes in the methodology that goes into calculating the pay gap. FSC member and National Treasury Employees Union president Colleen Kelley stated that "This is just one more example of why the pay freeze needs to come to an end in 2013- and NTEU will continue to work to that end when Congress reconvenes."



NTEU FIGHTS "FISCAL CLIFF" CUTS

"Fiscal cliff" is the term used to describe what the U.S. government will face at the end of 2012, when the terms of the Budget Control Act of 2011 are scheduled to go into effect.

In late February 2012, Ben Bernanke, chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, popularized the term "fiscal cliff" for this crisis. Before the House Financial Services Committee he described that "a massive fiscal cliff of large spending cuts and tax increases" would take place on January 1, 2013

Among the laws set to change at midnight on December 31st, 2012 are the end of last year's temporary payroll tax cuts, the end of certain tax breaks for businesses, shifts in the alternative minimum tax that would take

a larger bite, the end of the tax cuts from 2001-2003, and the beginning of taxes related to President Obama's health care law. At the same time, the spending cuts agreed upon as part of the debt ceiling deal of 2011 will begin to go into effect. Over 1,000 government programs are in line for large automatic cuts.

A coalition of nearly two-dozen organizations of federal employees, managers and retirees, including the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), reminded Congress of the \$103 billion in economic sacrifices made by federal workers and urged Congress to oppose efforts to target them for additional budget savings related to avoiding the impending "fiscal cliff".

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CONVERTING TO PART-TIME

Periodically, we receive inquiries about converting from full-time employment to part-time employment. At first glance, the transition seems simple. You work between sixteen and thirty-two hours per week instead of the normal forty hour workweek. That's the easy part. The more complicated part is how your reduced schedule impacts your retirement eligibility, promotion eligibility and benefits. Let's start with retirement eligibility.

Part-time service is credited as full service for retirement eligibility purposes. Therefore, if you worked for thirty-four years as a part-time employee, you earned thirty-four years of creditable service towards retirement. In addition, your high-three is computed as if you were a full-time employee. In other words, if you're a part-time, grade 12, step 10 revenue agent, your salary for retirement annuity computation purposes is still \$100,859. Your annuity is

prorated based upon the amount of hours you worked, so if you worked twenty hours per week, your annuity would be 50% of the annuity of a full-time employee. There are numerous variables in the computation based upon whether you are a CSRS or FERS employee or any previous full-time employment status, so those inquiries should be handled on a case by case basis.

The more immediate impact is on your promotion eligibility and benefits. We'll tackle promotion eligibility first. Part-time employees aren't eligible for promotion to the next higher grade until they work the same number of hours that a full-time employee would need to work in order to satisfy the one year of specialized experience needed to make you eligible for promotion. However, you earn within grade increases on a calendar year basis. So, it's possible for a part-time employee to accrue two steps before they're eligible for promotion to the next grade.



PART-TIME EMPLOYEES WORK BETWEEN SIXTEEN AND THIRTY-TWO HOURS

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SURVEY TO DEBUNK FED MYTHS

In a recent survey conducted by the National Treasury Employees Union, more than 75 percent of the respondents indicated that wealthy Americans should pay a "fair share" toward deficit reduction, and more than two-thirds indicated Congress should raise taxes on the wealthy before cutting back key federal services.

NTEU said it commissioned the survey in an effort to dispel a variety of myths that negatively impact federal workers and agencies.

"Some political rhetoric would have you believe that Americans today have an 'austerity at any cost' view of the federal budget," NTEU President Colleen Kelley said. "The fact is that most Americans, when asked about specific services, believed the government should invest more in providing such services."

The survey of 1,000 respondents, who were questioned by outside polling firm Ipsos Public Affairs, also found that 84 percent of U.S. residents believe that the federal government should hire the most highly qualified persons to fill jobs.

"It is clear that a super-majority of Americans understand and value the work carried out by federal employees and believe in a balanced approach to federal budgeting," Kelley said.

What has NTEU done for YOU?



Your rights and benefits at the IRS came from the hard work of **NTEU**, **NOT** from Management.

This is a list of what NTEU has won for you:

- Annual and sick leave advances
- The right to swap jobs anywhere in the country with employees in the same series grade and skill
- A Multi-Million-dollar awards program based on annual performance ratings
- The right to challenge your annual appraisal score and take that challenge to a neutral third party
- A temporary promotion when you're doing higher-graded work
- The right to challenge a decision not to promote you; to get a access to the complete promotion, file and to ask a neutral third party if the agency treated you fairly
- And so much more...



MOVIN' ON UP!

Your ranking score consists of three components, your appraisal, your awards and your responses to the CJE questions. We'll discuss the score derived from your appraisal first. If you're rated as an outstanding employee, you get 57 points for your appraisal. If you're rated as an exceeds fully successful employee, you get 47 points for your appraisal. Fully successful and minimally successful employees receive 17 and 7 points respectively.

The second component is your awards. You receive one point for each Performance Award, QSI or Special Act Award granted for your performance that you received in the last three years. You can't receive more than one of these awards in a single fiscal year, so three is the maximum number of points that you can receive from your awards.

The final component is your responses to the CJE questions. You can get up to a maximum of forty points based up on your responses to the CJE questions.

Once the agency computes your score, it multiplies that number by .3 and then adds 70 to that total. The agency then compiles all of the applicants scores and ranks them in numerical order. The highest scores make the best qualified list. The agency can only select an employee who makes the best qualified list.



As you can see, your appraisal and your responses to the CJE questions are critical to maximize your score. Fully successful employees have a harder time competing against outstanding employees, while exceeds fully successful employees have as much of an uphill battle competing with outstanding rated employees.

It is ESSENTIAL that you use every tool at your disposal to improve your appraisal score. This includes preparing a self-assessment every year and disputing appraisals that you believe do not accurately reflect your performance either by discussing your appraisal with your manager or grieving your appraisal. Remember, if you grieve non-selection, you can't make an argument that the other applicants' appraisal scores are too high. You bear the responsibility of making your appraisal score as high as possible. As always if you have questions, contact the office or your team steward.

(Continued from page 1 **FISCAL CLIFF**)

NTEU President Colleen M. Kelley has been vocal on this subject, pointing out that since the beginning of 2011; the budget savings from reduced compensation to the federal workforce have totaled at least \$103 billion.

The Federal-Postal Coalition has sent a letter to Congress stating that "Federal and postal employees and their families are hardworking, middle-class Americans who are struggling during these tough times just like other Americans. No other group has been asked to financially contribute the way they have, and it is time our nation's leaders found other ways to reduce the deficit other than continually taking from those who have dedicated their lives to public service."

Supportive Members of Congress have also sent a letter to President Obama and Speaker Boehner and Democratic Leader Pelosi stating that "Federal and postal employees and their families share our commitment to serving the American People in the most efficient, cost-effective manner, and just like other taxpayers, they too are struggling during these tough times. Many face an uncertain employment future under almost any deficit reduction scenario, and to date, no other group has been asked to financially contribute the way they have. Our dedicated civil servants understand the principle of shared sacrifice and justifiably expect others will actually share in it".

The \$103 billion in "budget savings" is a result of:

- A pay freeze for calendar years 2011 and 2012—\$60 billion over ten years;
- A pay raise of 0.5% under consideration for calendar year 2013, an amount significantly below what the raise should be and currently delayed until April 2013—\$28 billion over ten years; and
- New employees with less than five years federal experience will contribute 2.3% more of their salaries as of January 1, 2013—\$15 billion over ten years.

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Likewise, many of your benefits are prorated based upon the number of hours you work. For instance, your leave accruals are calculated on a prorated basis; therefore if you're a new employee working twenty hours per week, you would earn two hours of annual and sick leave per pay period rather than the normal four hours of annual and sick leave. Similarly, your credit hour carryover is also determined on a prorated basis, so in the preceding example you could only carryover twelve credit hours per pay period rather than twenty-four.

Furthermore, part-time employment also reduces the government's contribution towards your health insurance premium on a prorated basis. Using the preceding example, the government would reduce its share of your health insurance premiums by half. So if a full-time employee pays \$100 per pay period in health insurance premiums, and the government pays \$300 per pay period, the government would instead pay \$150, and you would pay \$150 per pay period plus your portion of the premium, i.e. \$100. if you have any additional questions about part-time employment contact the chapter office for more details.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NTEU CHAPTER 67



St. Anne's Center
Homeless Shelter

Kindle Fire Giveaway!!



You can donate to St Anne's Center and receive a chance to win a brand new 32 GB **Kindle Fire HD** with a 7" display and Dual speaker Dolby sound.

Help provide for the **16** families that currently reside at St Anne's. For every dollar donated you will receive a ticket to win!

All proceeds go to St. Anne's Center



Bring donations to the NTEU office

The drawing will be held December 21, 2012

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT NTEU OFFICE EXT 6511

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CHRISTMAS PARTY!

SATURDAY DECEMBER 8TH 1-4 PM
AT THE EAGLES 9th and Wall Ave.

Santa will be there providing treats for kids and lunch for everyone!



RSVP to the NTEU office before December 3

Peoples Voice Staff

Daniel Martinez - Editor-in-Chief Robert Lawrence - Co-editor Jenny Brown - Co-editor



Name _____

Phone _____

bring this coupon to the office for a chance to win \$50 prize!!