

June 30, 2020

House Committee on Appropriations
United States Congress
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I urge you to support including a federal pay rate adjustment for calendar year 2021 in the fiscal year 2021 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill. Following last year's policy of having the federal pay rate adjustment match the military pay increase, which was also common practice throughout the 1990s and 2000s, we ask that the adjustment be on par with the military pay raise that is provided for in the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act.

Federal workers have made outstanding contributions and sacrifices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many continue to perform essential jobs while facing a greater risk of infection, as more than ten thousand have tested positive for the coronavirus. Doctors and nurses have cared for thousands of individuals with COVID-19 amidst shortages of personal protective equipment. Both the Internal Revenue Service and the Small Business Administration have distributed hundreds of billions of dollars to businesses and individuals at record speeds in response to the current economic crisis. As I write this, federal employees with the Department of Health and Human Services continue to spearhead the federal response: the National Institutes of Health researches treatments and vaccines, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tracks the spread of the virus and helps communities respond. Countless more federal workers continue to serve the nation through remote work, maintaining government operations amid difficult circumstances. We ought to recognize and honor their service through more than just words.

Federal pay rates must be adjusted annually in order for the government to maintain the competitive pay required to recruit and retain a well-qualified and high-performing workforce. The doctors and nurses who care for our veterans, the cybersecurity professionals protecting critical infrastructure, the NASA engineers, NIH scientists, federal law enforcement and intelligence officers, prosecutors and judges, and many more who comprise our federal workforce require adequate compensation or we risk losing their talents. Even as some sectors of the economy have been devastated by the pandemic, others continue to operate and even thrive, and the federal government must compete with them for skilled workers.

For these reasons, I urge you to support appropriating a modest federal pay rate adjustment through the FY21 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill. Doing so would not only recognize the outstanding service of federal employees in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak, but it would also be a prudent

investment to ensure that the programs and activities Congress authorizes and appropriates money for are overseen and implemented by a capable workforce.

Thank you for the consideration of our views. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact NARFE's Staff Vice President for Policy and Programs Jessica Klement at jklement@narfe.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Thomas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ken Thomas
National President