

September 11, 2019

Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
S-128 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy, Ranking Member Coons, and members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government:

On behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I respectfully request including in the Senate's fiscal year 2020 (FY20) Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) Appropriations Act two provisions from the House-passed version of the bill, H.R. 3351. Specifically, NARFE supports a 3.1 percent average increase to federal pay rates in calendar year 2020 as well as denying funds to carry out the proposed reorganization of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

A federal pay rate adjustment would prevent federal pay from lagging further behind private-sector pay for comparable jobs and is necessary to recruit and retain a well-qualified and high-performing workforce. The doctors and nurses who care for our veterans, the cybersecurity professionals tasked with responding to emerging threats, NASA engineers, NIH scientists, federal law enforcement and intelligence officers – these individuals and all of those who make up our federal workforce require adequate compensation, or we risk losing their talents. The 3.1 percent average increase is based on recent increases in private-sector pay and provides parity with the military pay raise included in the House and Senate versions of the National Defense Authorization Act. It would strengthen federal recruitment and retention efforts at a time when the government needs to fill mission-critical positions.

At a minimum, I urge the subcommittee to appropriate the 2.6 percent across-the-board pay adjustment proposed by the president in the alternative pay plan he submitted to Congress in August. The president's decision to change course from his previous effort to institute a pay freeze acknowledges federal workers for their hard work and valuable public service. It also reflects the reality that federal pay rates must keep up, to some degree, with private-sector pay increases in order for the government to attract and retain top talent. However, I also urge you to include a 0.5 percent average locality pay adjustment in the FY20 FSGG bill to maintain parity with the military pay increase and stay on pace with market values.

I also implore the subcommittee to include language in the FSGG bill denying funds for the administration's misguided proposal to reorganize OPM. The plan is an ill-conceived effort that would harm the federal community and, in turn, the American people by politicizing the federal workforce and hindering key OPM functions. The administration has failed to make a compelling case for moving OPM's programmatic functions,

including the administration of health care to more than 8 million individuals and retirement services for all federal retirees, to the General Services Administration (GSA). OPM is in need of modernization to meet the needs of today's federal community, but a complete absorption of the agency into GSA does not solve those problems. For a full review of NARFE's concerns with the reorganization, please see our [testimony](#) before the House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Government Operations.

For these reasons, I urge you to support a 3.1 percent average pay raise for federal employees in calendar year 2020 and to deny the use of any funds to reorganize OPM. Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you have any questions or comments, please contact NARFE's Staff Vice President for Advocacy Jessica Klement at 571-483-1264 or jklement@narfe.org.

Sincerely,

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

Ken Thomas
NARFE National President