

Richard G. Thissen
National President



Jon Dowie
National Secretary/Treasurer

January 26, 2015

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the five million federal employees, retirees and their survivors represented by the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), I respectfully request that you include a 3.8 percent pay raise for federal employees in your budget for fiscal year 2016. A 3.8 percent pay raise in 2016 would mirror legislation already introduced this Congress by Representative Gerry Connolly, D-VA, and Senator Brian Schatz, D-HI, and counts 39 cosponsors among its supporters.

In the last five years, federal employees have endured a three-year pay freeze, two years of limited raises, reduced pay due to increased retirement contributions (without any added benefit), furloughs due to sequestration and a government shutdown that caused grave uncertainty. With an improving economy and growing private-sector wages, a modest 3.8 percent raise would compensate for these sacrifices and help to maintain an efficient and effective federal workforce.

Without competitive pay, the federal government will fail to recruit and retain the best and brightest into public service. We rely on these men and women to take criminals off our streets and keep them behind bars, assist our military at home and abroad, help prepare us for and recover from severe weather, care for our veterans and much more. Providing our public servants adequate compensation is about more than just fairness, it is about ensuring we have a government that meets our country's needs.

Yet the gap between federal and private-sector pay now stands at 35 percent, according to the Federal Salary Council, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data. This gap has been growing, as federal employees had their pay frozen for three years and received only a 1 percent raise this year and last year. Meanwhile, private-sector wages have risen 8.3 percent in the past five years, and the cost of living increased 11 percent. Furthermore, new employees now pay 3.6 percent more toward retirement than their predecessors without any additional benefit.

A modest 3.8 percent pay raise will not close the salary gap, but it is a step toward catching federal employees up to the now-thriving private-sector. It is also necessary to ensure they do not fall further behind. Many middle-class federal employees accept lower pay in the spirit of public

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

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service. But you can ask for only so much sacrifice from individuals and families who face life's financial realities every day.

Thank you for considering NARFE's views. If you have any questions or comments regarding this request, please contact NARFE Legislative Director Jessica Klement at 703-838-7760 or jklement@narfe.org.

Most respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Thissen". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Richard Thissen
National President