



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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2019 IFPTE Issue Brief

116th Congress

Key Issues of importance to Federal Workers in 2019

Summary - Federal Employees have sacrificed nearly \$200 billion

Since 2011 our nation's federal employees have sacrificed nearly \$200 billion for our nation through pay freezes and pension cuts that went primarily towards deficit reduction. Government employees have also experienced furlough days and serious economic suffering due to the 2013 and three FY19 government shutdowns (including the longest one in history), continuing threats of future shutdowns, and sequestration. Despite this, some in Congress and the Administration continue to attack federal employees and their unions.

Given that the Trump Administration will likely propose a Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) budget that targets federal employee pay, benefits and pensions, IFPTE requests the Congress' consideration of the following legislative items to protect federal employee compensation, retirement and health care in order to preserve the government's ability to recruit and retain the best talent America has to offer:

1. Support a fair and fiscally responsible COLA of 2.6% in FY19 and 3.6% in FY20 – After three consecutive years of pay freezes, followed by meager annual adjustments, federal workers have seen their incomes decrease by nearly 15% with respect to inflation over the past decade. Yet, the Trump Administration has ordered yet another pay freeze in FY19 and we don't expect anything better in his FY20 budget. The time for a fair COLA correction for federal workers is long overdue and IFPTE urges you to support a 2.6% COLA for FY19 (HR 790, S 262) and a 3.6% or greater pay increase for FY20 (consistent with the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates [FAIR] Act of 2019 (HR 1073, S 426), sponsored by Rep. Connolly in the House and Sen. Schatz in the Senate).
 2. Increase or eliminate to the artificial GS salary cap – Senior highly skilled workers have seen their arbitrarily salaries capped preventing them even from receiving their full meager COLAs. IFPTE urges that the cap be raised or eliminated before the government loses any more of its best workers.
 3. Protect/Restore federal employee pensions – Congress has established a four-tiered pension for federal employees – CSRS and 3 different FERS systems, with workers hired in 2013 unfairly paying 2.3% more and those hired after 2014 paying 3.6% more with no benefit increase. Sadly, past Administration budgets have continued draconian effects to cut pensions, including doing away with the FERS defined benefit altogether for new hires. IFPTE not only asks that Congress block any further erosion of federal pension or TSP retirement benefits (e.g., the proposed decrease in G fund interest, replacing the high-three with a high-five pension computation, ...), and urges support for the *Federal Employee Pension Fairness Act*, sponsored by Maryland Representative Anthony Brown in the last Congress to bring federal pension contributions back to pre-2012 levels for all employees.
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4. Preserve employer FEHBP premium contributions – Right now the federal government pays 75% of FEHBP premiums, while employees pay 25%. The President's FY20 budget request is expected to propose doubling workers' contribution to 50%. IFPTE strongly urges rejection of this proposal.
5. Protect the FERS annuity supplement – This proposal would take away the possibility for many federal workers to retire before the age of 62 and frustrate the ability of federal government to better manage the workforce through attrition. IFPTE urges Congress to reject this proposal.

IFPTE positions on provision that could be considered as a part of the FY19 NDAA:

1. Block efforts to implement a new round of Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC) – A BRAC would lead to the loss of tens of thousands of good jobs and devastate communities all across the US. IFPTE believes it is premature to approve any BRAC until there is a comprehensive and strategic cost-benefit analysis of our overseas bases. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report showed that the total cost for implementing the 2005 round of BRAC ballooned from the original estimate of \$21 billion to \$35.1 billion (GAO-12-709R). IFPTE urges Congress to deny BRAC authority to the administration until the proper cost-benefit analysis is fully completed.
2. Repeal and/or defund flawed and discriminatory performance-based Reductions-in-Force (RIF): As a result of Section 1101 of the FY16 NDAA, DoD RIF rules diminish both Veterans Preference and seniority in favor of flawed performance ratings. Given that performance rating systems throughout the government have historically been proven to be discriminatory, particularly against women, older employees, and workers of color, IFPTE asks that Congress repeal Section 1101 of the FY16 NDAA to ensure protections for all workers and respect for our veterans in any RIF situation.
3. Maintain the A-76 moratorium – Fortunately, the FY18 NDAA conference report removed Senate language to green light A-76 privatization. An A-76 moratorium was put in place after GAO and the DOD IG determined that the DOD could not prove that contracting out of government work provided any cost savings to the taxpayer. IFPTE's asks that the moratorium remain in place until a complete cost-savings analysis is provided to the SASC and HASC.
4. Close the unfair Accelerated Promotion Program (APP) donut hole – The Accelerated Promotion Program (APP) has allowed Navy shipyards to compete with the private sector for many years by guaranteeing engineers hired into our four public shipyards at the GS-5/7 levels are eligible for a one-time accelerated promotion to the next higher-grade after successful completion of training. OCHR headquarters has stifle fair application of the APP such that workers hired between January 2016 and 2016 are unfairly left out in the cold. IFPTE requests that Congress close the OCHR loophole and require the Navy to extend the APP to those hired between January and December 2016.
5. Include pay protection for workers receiving Special Salary Rate (SSR) in Non-Foreign Areas – IFPTE supports including an exception to 5 USC 5305(h) and 5 CFR 530.303(d), statues to allow workers in Non-Foreign areas like Hawaii and Alaska from receiving both SSR and Locality pay.
6. Revert to a one-year probationary period for DOD workers – As a part of the FY16 NDAA, and over the objections of IFPTE, Congress increased the probationary period for DOD workers from one year to two years. IFPTE believes this was a misguided provision that added needless bureaucracy to this process, as 12 months is more than enough time for federal managers to determine if an employee is adequate to continue. Please repeal the two-year probationary period and return to the pre-2016 one-year level.