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**CONNOLLY STATEMENT ON PROPOSED FEDERAL PAY FREEZE**

***Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA) issued the following statement today on President Obama's proposal for a two-year freeze on pay for federal employees:***

As we continue to emerge from the worst recession since the Great Depression, Democrats and Republicans agree that long-term deficit reduction must be a top priority.

Make no mistake, reducing the deficit and paying down the debt will not be easy and all Americans, including federal employees, will have to do their part. But a federal pay freeze should only be considered as part of an overall deficit reduction plan. Singling out federal employees in advance of a comprehensive plan is counter-productive and risks leaving Americans with the false impression that federal employee pay raises are a significant contributor to our national debt.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, tax cuts without offsetting spending reductions, and rising entitlement costs are the fundamental drivers of rising deficits. Allowing federal employees to be used as a political football merely serves to distract from the hard choices we must make to bring our nation's fiscal house in order.

Furthermore, thousands of civilian federal employees are serving alongside our armed forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other dangerous posts around the world. While the President, justifiably, is not proposing to freeze military pay, federal employees working in those war zones and facing the same risks of death and injury should receive the same respect.

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**Articles Citing Deaths of Civilians in War Zones:**

October 2009 crash that killed 3 DEA agents (one local constituent of Connolly's)  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/27/AR2009102703511.html>

Suicide bomber kills 8 at CIA base in Afghanistan – Dec 2009

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/30/AR2009123000201.html>

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