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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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May 3, 2007

The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
H-218 Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jose Serrano  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Financial Services  
and General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
1040A Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ralph Regula  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Financial Services  
and General Government  
Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Obey and Serrano and Ranking Members Lewis and Regula:

As your Committee moves toward consideration of the Fiscal Year 2008 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, I write to urge the Committee to ensure parity in pay adjustments for civilian and military personnel in the coming fiscal year. Given the action this week in the Armed Services Committee to increase military personnel pay by 3.5 percent, I believe it is critical civilian personnel receive a similar increase.

As we fight the war on terrorism at home and abroad, both the Armed Services and the Federal civilian workforce must work to provide Americans the government and protection they deserve, and both should be compensated accordingly. In the coming fiscal year, parity in pay adjustments remains the vehicle to help achieve this goal. As the men and women of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard wage war against terror around the globe, Federal civilian employees from DOD, DHS, FBI, CIA, U.S. Customs Service, Secret Service, Department of Justice, Department of State, and many other agencies support their efforts and work to ensure the security of our nation and people.

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This year marked a significant step forward when, for the second consecutive year, President Bush's budget submission recognized the importance of pay parity between military and civilian employees. Pay parity is not a new concept. Historically, Congress has expressed strong bipartisan support for parity in pay between our military and federal civilian sectors in recognition of the important roles both play. Congress has worked through the appropriations process to ensure adequate pay adjustments for civilian and uniformed employees, and, in nearly every year over the last two decades, the annual pay adjustments have been identical. I firmly believe it is imperative to continue this tradition – not only to ensure pay parity between military and civilian employees but to address, to the extent we can, the vast gap between public and private sector wages.

Despite efforts under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act to close the pay gap, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates private-sector employees earn better than 30 percent more than their public-sector civilian counterparts and 10 percent more than their counterparts in the military. Pay is not the only factor in recruitment and retention, but the vast size of the wage gap that currently exists between the public and private sector will continue to severely hamper our efforts. The federal government may never be able to compete with the private sector, dollar for dollar, but we must ensure that we do not fall further behind in the battle for talent.

I thank you for your leadership and assistance on this matter and appreciate your consideration of my request. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Davis", with a stylized, cursive script.

Tom Davis