

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 8, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to placing the offsets for a tax extenders package on the backs of federal workers. We would urge you to reject any proposals that call for pay freezes or other forms of compensation reduction for federal workers, or significant reductions in the federal workforce.


Federal employees have already taken on a huge burden with the two-year pay freeze implemented in January of this year. This policy will continue to provide significant savings in future years; \$28 billion in five years, \$60 billion in ten years. To ask these hard-working individuals--the very people who keep our food supply safe, our borders secure and develop life-saving technologies-- to make further sacrifices is simply unfair. The Employment Cost Index indicates that extending the pay freeze for just one additional year would mean federal employees salaries would be frozen while the average private sector employees would have seen increases of 4.7%.

Federal employees are facing the same challenges as other middle-class families during this difficult economic time. Yet, this sub-group of middle class workers is in danger of being singled-out to offset a tax cut for all middle class Americans. Further, older federal employees are not eligible for any payroll tax reduction because they pay into a federal retirement system that does not include Social Security benefits.

With significant reductions in discretionary spending continuing into the foreseeable future, each day, federal employees are being asked to do more with less. Arbitrarily reducing the size of the workforce would significantly impact the quality and availability of governmental services that Americans expect and deserve. While we can all agree on the importance of job growth and deficit reduction, we cannot balance the budget on the backs of federal employees who carry out the business of the American people every day. We need to ensure that the best and brightest continue to be drawn to public service.

We appreciate the opportunity to bring this concern to your attention and look forward to working with you to enact tax legislation that will support all middle-class families, including federal employees.

Sincerely,



Senator Benjamin L. Cardin



Senator Daniel K. Akaka



Senator Barbara Boxer



Senator Tom Harkin



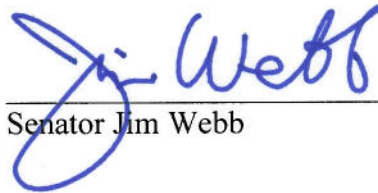
Senator Carl Levin



Senator Barbara A. Mikulski



Senator Mark Warner



Senator Jim Webb