

NTEU

The National Treasury Employees Union

April 24, 2008

Honorable Ben Nelson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Personnel
Senate Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
SR-228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Nelson:

On behalf of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) and our more than 150,000 federal workers in 31 government agencies, I am writing to lend support to the Military Coalition's request for a 3.9 percent pay raise for fiscal year 2009 for military personnel. As you know, the Military Coalition testified on behalf of groups ranging from active military personnel, to veterans and family groups, in support of the 3.9 percent pay at the Personnel Subcommittee's April 16, 2008 hearing. The Coalition cited the pay gap between military personnel and the private sector and urged the subcommittee to include a pay increase which amounts to the annual rise in Employment Cost Index (ECI), now 3.4 percent, plus ½ percent.

We at NTEU support the military request and will be working to enact the same level for federal civil servants. Last year, we supported the military pay raise at ½ percent above the ECI which was included in the Department of Defense (DOD) Authorization bill and ultimately became law (PL 110-181). We also supported the inclusion of key language in last year's House-passed bill calling for future pay raises for military personnel to reflect the longstanding principle of providing a raise based on the annual increase in ECI plus ½ percent through the year 2012. While language was dropped in last year's conference, it was consistent with longstanding language in the DOD Authorization Acts for fiscal years 2000 and 2004 (PL 106-65; PL 108-136). That standard had been used in every year of the current administration until 2007 when military personnel received only a 2.2 percent raise.

Like the military, federal civilian workers serve their country faithfully in defending the homeland, in keeping our borders safe, and our government systems operational. They, too, face a widening pay gap. In nearly every year in the past two decades there have been equal adjustments in military and civilian pay to help close the pay gap between these two groups and the private sector. The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act was enacted in 1990 to close the gap between federal and private sector pay and has never been fully implemented. Today, federal employees on average are paid substantially less than their private sector counterparts.

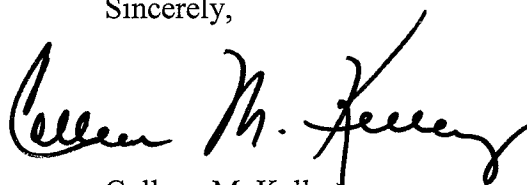
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Like the military we are also requesting a 3.9 percent pay raise, which amounts to one-half percent above the ECI, and we will work with the appropriate committees to achieve this.

Pay parity has also been a longstanding principle in military and civilian pay raises. In keeping with this concept I urge you to: 1) approve a pay raise of 3.9 percent for our brothers and sisters in the military; and 2) restore the language requiring the military pay raise to be ½ of one percent above the annual rise in the ECI for the next several years.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen M. Kelley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Colleen M. Kelley
National President