

GERALD E. CONNOLLY
11TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA
2238 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-1492

FAIRFAX OFFICE:
4115 ANNANDALE ROAD
SUITE 103
ANNANDALE, VA 22003
(703) 256-3071

PRINCE WILLIAM OFFICE:
2241-D TACKETT'S MILL DRIVE
WOODBRIE, VA 22192
(571) 408-4407

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4611

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEES:
CHAIRMAN, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
ECONOMIC AND CONSUMER POLICY
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, AND INTERNATIONAL
TERRORISM
ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND NONPROLIFERATION

November 24, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-307
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Granger, and Vice Chairman Leahy:

Earlier this year, in both the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Budget Request as well as his "Message to the Congress on the 2021 Alternative Plan for Pay Adjustments," President Trump proposed a 1 percent pay increase for federal civilian employees.¹ The House-passed bill H.R. 7617, "Defense, Commerce, Justice, Science, Energy and Water Development, Financial Services and General Government, Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations Act, 2021," would allow this pay increase to go into effect.² Despite support for the pay increase from the White House and the House of Representatives, the Senate proposed an appropriations bill on November 10, 2020 that included a pay freeze for federal civilian employees.³

¹ President's Proposed FY 2021 Budget (online at www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ap_5_strengthening_fy21.pdf); *Message to the Congress on the 2021 Alternative Plan for Pay Adjustments* (Feb. 10, 2020) (online at www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/message-congress-2021-alternative-plan-pay-adjustments).

² *H.R. 7617* (Aug. 12, 2020) (online at www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7617/all-actions?overview=closed); *Feds' Chances For a Bigger 2021 Pay Raise Wane, and a Renewed Push for Coronavirus Hazard Pay*, GovExec (Jul. 29, 2020) (online at www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/2020/07/feds-chances-bigger-2021-pay-raise-wane-and-renewed-push-hazard-pay/167308/).

³ Senate Appropriations Committee, Financial Services and General Government, 2021 Bill Highlights (online at www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FY21%20BILL%20HIGHLIGHTS_FSGG.pdf); Draft FY

The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Kay Granger
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Page 2

We firmly believe that our federal civilian workforce deserves at least a 3 percent pay increase, which would be parity with the military.⁴ Absent an agreement on pay parity for federal employees, we respectfully urge you to retain the 1 percent pay increase for federal civilian employees in FY 2021 appropriations legislation as requested by the President and agreed to by the House of Representatives.

With the expectation of a 1 percent pay increase based on the President's own recommendation, agencies will have already accounted for the increase in their budgets. More importantly, more than 2 million federal civilian employees have likewise been expecting this increase and incorporated it into their family budgets.⁵

As we learned after last year's government shutdown, the majority of the federal workforce is already living paycheck to paycheck.⁶ Yet, these dedicated individuals have remained undeterred from providing critical services and maintaining the operations of their respective agencies, even in the face of a global pandemic. Under extraordinary conditions, federal civilian employees have stayed on mission, working from home while simultaneously juggling family obligations. Some employees have even risked their own health and that of their families to deliver mail, collect census responses, provide healthcare to veterans, inspect meat and poultry facilities, and research cures for COVID-19.⁷ Freezing their pay when their share of health insurance premiums is increasing by an average of 4.9 percent next year is unacceptable.⁸

Federal employees have demonstrated they are invaluable to this nation. We should not take them for granted, but rather, show them that their hard work and sacrifices are valued. Congress must step up and ensure that the federal workforce is treated with the respect and provided the pay raise it deserves.

2021 appropriations bill for financial services and general government (online at www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FSGGFY2021.pdf); *Committee Releases FY21 Bills in Effort to Advance Process, Produce Bipartisan Results*, Senate Appropriations Committee Press Release (Nov. 10, 2020) (online at www.appropriations.senate.gov/news/committee-releases-fy21-bills-in-effort-to-advance-process-produce-bipartisan-results).

⁴ Letter to House Appropriations Committee (Jul. 10, 2020) (online at https://connolly.house.gov/uploadedfiles/federal_employee_pay_parity_letter.pdf)

⁵ Estimated 2.1 million federal civilian employees per *Federal Workforce Statistics Sources: OPM and OMB*, Congressional Research Service (Oct. 23, 2020) (online at <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43590.pdf>).

⁶ *Public service and the federal government*, Brookings (May 27, 2020) (online at www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/public-service-and-the-federal-government/); *78% of Workers Live Paycheck to Paycheck*, Forbes (Jan. 11, 2019) (online at www.forbes.com/sites/zackfriedman/2019/01/11/live-paycheck-to-paycheck-government-shutdown/?sh=6ef089ca4f10).

⁷ *Frontline Feds: Serving the Public During a Pandemic*, Subcommittee on Government Operations Hearing (Jun. 25, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/legislation/hearings/frontline-feds-serving-the-public-during-a-pandemic>).

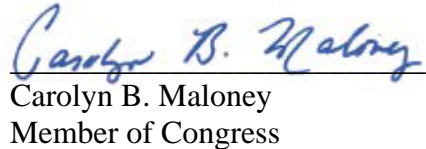
⁸ *Federal Employees' Share of FEHB Premiums to Increase Nearly 5% in 2021*, FedSmith (Oct. 14, 2020) (online at www.fedsmith.com/2020/10/14/federal-employees-share-premiums-increase-nearly-5-2021/).

The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Kay Granger
The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Page 3

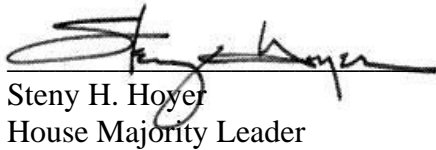
Sincerely,



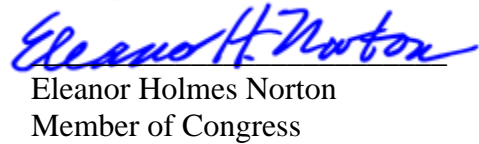
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



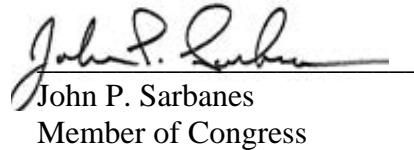
Steny H. Hoyer
House Majority Leader



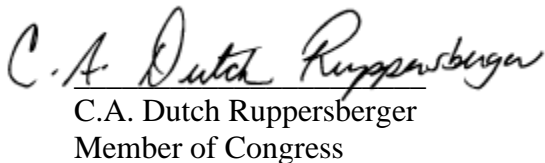
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



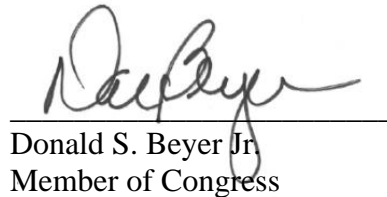
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



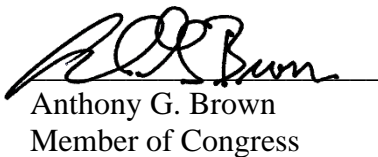
John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



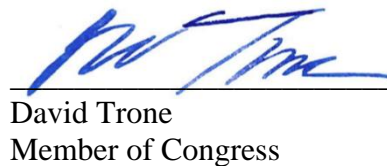
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



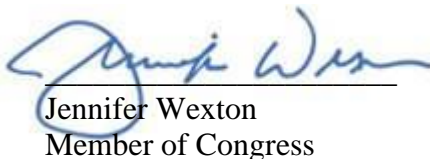
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



David Trone
Member of Congress



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress