November 19, 2026

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Include a minimum 3.8% pay adjustment for federal employees in FY27 appropriations

Dear Chairman Cole, Chair Collins, Ranking Member DeLauro, and Vice Chair Murray:

As Congress takes up FY27 government funding before the current continuing resolution expires on December 11, the undersigned public and private sector unions urge you to include, in whatever spending measure you advance, a provision mandating at least a 3.8% pay adjustment for federal employees in 2027.

Absent congressional action, the president's alternative pay plan will leave most federal employees with no adjustment at all in 2027, following a wholly inadequate 1% raise this year. Meanwhile, the enrollee share of Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program premiums will rise an average of 10.9% in 2027. Enrollee premiums have thus increased by more than 41% since the start of 2025, while most civilian pay has risen only about 3%.

Title 5 already provides for a significant raise for General Schedule employees based on the Employment Cost Index, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' measure of private sector wage and salary growth. Yet the president has again invoked the statute's "national emergency or serious economic conditions" exception to avoid the annual adjustments the law would otherwise require. Repeated use of this authority has produced a staggering pay gap of roughly 25% when comparing federal workers' pay with their private sector and state and local counterparts.

This pay gap, together with rising inflation, housing costs, and soaring health premiums, erodes federal employees' living standards every year. The 3.8% increase President Trump has directed for federal law enforcement officers is the bare minimum all federal employees should receive. With the administration proposing raises of 5% to 7% for active-duty military next year, a minimum 3.8% adjustment for civilian employees, hundreds of thousands of whom support military readiness and veterans' care, is not only eminently reasonable but simply the right thing to do.

Federal employees face the same rising costs as all Americans, along with uniquely severe stress and financial uncertainty since January 2025, including two record-setting shutdowns since October 2025 and the administration's far-reaching changes to the civil service.

Private sector union members, too, rely on functioning federal agencies, from the NLRB to OSHA to the Department of Transportation. If Congress wants those agencies to serve the American people effectively, it should value the employees who arrive each day, rather than forcing them to worry whether they can make ends meet and driving them out of public service. Whether Congress passes full-year spending bills or another CR during the lame-duck session, the legislation must include a minimum 3.8% pay adjustment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
AFT
Air Line Pilots Association
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
Antilles Consolidated Education Association
Association of Flight Attendants-CWA
Int Organization of Masters Mates & Pilots AFL-CIO
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE)
International Association of Iron Workers
International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM)
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
International Plate Printers, Die Stampers, Plate Makers& Engravers of N.A
International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers
International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC)
Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)
Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO or MTD, AFL-CIO
Metal Trades Department/AFL-CIO
NAGE/SEIU Federal Division
National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA)
National Association of Agriculture Employees
National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)
National Education Association (NEA)
National Federation of Federal Employees
National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO)
National Treasury Employees Union
Patent Office Professional Association
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO
Service Employees International Union
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD)

Transport Workers Union of America
United Auto Workers (UAW)
United Mine Workers of America
United Steelworkers (USW)
Union Veterans Council, AFL-CIO
Utility Workers Union of America

cc: The Honorable Dave Joyce, Chairman, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, House Committee on Appropriations The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, House Committee on Appropriations The Honorable Bill Hagerty, Chairman, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, Senate Committee on Appropriations The Honorable Jack Reed, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, Senate Committee on Appropriations