

Pay freeze only a first step

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Everybody likes a pay raise. It means more money to take home and also usually implies an "attaboy" -- a "pat on the back" for doing a good job.

But pay raises have to be paid for -- by somebody, somehow.

In private employment, pay raises come from profits from the sales of products or services. But in government, pay raises come from the taxpayers.

We should always pay necessary government employees reasonably, with their pay comparable to that of private employees doing similar jobs. It may be a surprise to some, however, that many "government" jobs pay more than equivalent private jobs. (Average federal civilian worker pay is \$81,258, according to the Cato Institute.)

Our federal government has about 2 million civilian employees. Many of them surely are disappointed that President Barack Obama has called for a partial freeze on federal pay raises for the next two years. But why did he suggest the freeze?

We have a national debt of almost \$14 trillion! We are running deeper in the red -- more than \$1 trillion a year! Civilian unemployment is painfully high, and many private workers are not getting raises.

The president says the freeze will reduce federal spending \$5 billion over two years, yet the national debt is rising vastly more than that in just one year. Shouldn't we be looking for lots of other places to cut federal spending?

And by the way, before Obama's "freeze" takes effect, Congress will have to OK it. Will Congress agree?

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