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Rep. Cummings: People ‘Come to Government To Feed Their Souls’

By Eric Scheinber
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CNSNews.com) - Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) says, “so many people come to government knowing that they are not going to make the kind of money they would make in the private sector but they come to government to feed their souls.”

Cummings was speaking in Washington D.C. at the Legislative Conference of the National Treasury Employees Union on February 4th when he made the comments.

“People do not seem to understand that so many people come to government knowing that they are not going to make the kind of money that they would make in the private sector but they come to government to feed their souls,” Cummings told the audience.

The Maryland Democrat also told union members that getting federal workers a raise higher than the one proposed in President Obama’s budget is among his priorities.

“So what are my priorities? What’s my reason for being here?” Cummings said. “My ardent priority is to do whatever I can to help federal workers obtain fair compensation and meaningful pay raises.”

“President Obama’s budget for the next year recommends a 1.3% pay raise for federal employees I believe this is too low. I love the president but I believe this is far too low, far too low.”

“That’s why I co-sponsored with Representative (Gerry) Connelly (D-Va.) the FAIR Act. Which would raise pay up to 3.8% - even that’s too low.

A December 2014 Cato Institute report on federal and private sector worker pay finds, “In 2013 federal civilian workers had an average wage of \$81,076, according to data from the U.S. Bureau

of Economic Analysis. By comparison, the average wage of the nation's 107 million private-sector workers was \$55,424."

"When benefits like health care and pensions are included, average annual compensation for federal workers jumped to \$115,524, 74 percent more than the \$66,357 private sector average."

A 2012 Congressional Budget Office report shows that overall compensation for federal workers is 16% higher than for private sector workers, with private sector workers with bachelor's degrees making \$7.50 less per hour on average.