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Federal employees, retirees deserve their rewards

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I am proud to be a federal retiree and I am proud of my military and civilian service to the people of my country. I served three years in the Bemidji unit of the Minnesota Army National Guard, making sergeant, four years in the U.S. Navy on the front lines of our nation's strategic deterrent as a bomber crewman, and 26 years with the U.S. Postal Service at Bemidji, the last 18 years as a rural letter carrier, missing only one day on the route because of a blizzard with 20 inches of snowfall.

In recent months, with the nation's debt crisis, there almost seems to be an organized campaign against federal workers and retirees. The Cato Institute did a highly flawed and biased report on federal worker pay, comparing the federal workforce, which has a high percentage of professional people such as doctors, lawyers and scientists, with the entire private sector, including fast-food employees. How do you think those averages would compare? In a more recent study by the Office of Personnel Management, it was found that when federal employees' pay was compared with equivalent jobs in the private sector, federal employees were being paid 22 percent less.

Unlike the Social Security Trust Fund, the Civil Service Retirement System is actuarially sound and assured into perpetuity. While I was employed, I paid a substantially higher percentage into the CSRS than persons covered by Social Security were required to pay. The CSRS Trust Fund has a balance of \$750 billion, and when the last CSRS retiree dies, there will still be \$30 to \$50 billion remaining.

Federal employees and retirees are willing to do their share in solving the federal deficit, but do not want to be singled out for special punishment as has happened so often in the past.

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Bemidji

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