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## Obama signals major shift with pay freeze

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The pay freeze for federal workers that President Obama announced this morning indicates a post-election shift toward the center as budget cutting replaces stimulus spending for the second half of his term. (His deficit commission is to issue its full report Thursday, following the \$4 trillion deficit-cutting proposal by co-chairs Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson that jolted the Beltway and was surprisingly well received in the media.)

The pay-freeze, which would save \$60 billion over a decade, is much more significant than Obama's previous feints on the budget, such as his proposed freeze on non-security discretionary spending, which omitted most of the budget. It also follows the recommendations of at least two conservative think tanks, the Reason Foundation and the Cato Institute, not the usual source

for administration ideas.

Perhaps more influential was the story last August by USA Today that found, "Federal civil servants earned average pay and benefits of \$123,049 in 2009 while private workers made \$61,051 in total compensation, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis. The data are the latest available."

The White House said, "This freeze is not to punish federal workers or to disrespect the work that they do. It is the first of many actions we will take in the upcoming budget to put our nation on sound fiscal footing which will ask for some sacrifice from us all."

Posted By: Carolyn Lochhead (Email) | November 29 2010 at 08:04 AM

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