Federal Worker Firing Rates Keep Dropping

By: Jonah Bennett
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Despite recent scandals at the Veterans Affairs Department, the firing rate⬈ for the federal government has reached its lowest point in five years, reports the Federal Times.

In 2009, the number of federal workers fired amounted to 11,564, but there has been a steady decline to only 9,513 workers in 2013, in spite of workforce increases, according to the Office of Personnel Management. The lowest number of firings among federal agencies come from NASA and Social Security. The total number of federal workers is approximately 2 million. Overall, the firing rate is six times higher in the private sector.

The firings that have taken place in the federal government workforce have not been spread out evenly across all departments.

The Transportation Security Authority, for example, accounted for almost 15 percent, which is disproportionate large compared to the amount of federal workers employed by the agency.

This disparity has troubled J. David Cox, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, since the data show that the workers who are paid the lowest are more frequently fired.

"This disparity in removals is a waste of government resources⬈ because of the time and training each employee receives to perform their duties. If TSA employees had the same due process rights as other federal employees, the removal rate would not be as high," Cox said, according to Federal Times.

Chris Edwards, director of tax policy at the Cato Institute, had a slightly different take. "It's a real problem for the federal employees who work hard and do their jobs well. Poor performers drag down the morale of the whole team," he said.

"There is a balance between providing a shield so that the incoming parties in power don't try to do politically oriented firing and stack the civil service with cronies, but on the other hand I think we have gone too far in the other direction and that federal workers have far too much protection," Edwards continued.