




Editorials

[Comments](#)  20 | [Recommend](#)  3

Editorial: And the winners are...

01:00 AM EDT on Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Chris Edwards, director of tax-policy studies at the Cato Institute, did useful work when he analyzed the latest national wage and benefit data, categorized by industry, from the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis. "The new data show that average federal compensation is now more than double the average in the private sector," Mr. Edwards, quoted in Investors Business Daily, noted.

"In 2008, the average wage for 1.9 million federal civilian workers was \$79,197, which compared to an average \$49,935 for the nation's 108 million private-sector workers. The federal advantage is even more pronounced when worker benefits are included. In 2008, federal worker compensation averaged a remarkable \$119,982, which was more than double the private-sector average of \$59,909."

Most Americans have seen their incomes fall in inflation-adjusted terms in recent decades, albeit with greater access to cheap goods, especially clothes and electronic gizmos made in Asia. And if they're lucky enough to have jobs, their hours have increased.

Meanwhile, senior executives, financial-services folks and such professionals as lawyers, accountants and some medical specialists have seen their pay soar. Also rising has been the compensation of government workers at all levels, who also generally have much more job security than most of the rest of us. Many of them are also members of public-employee unions, many of which operate as monopolies that can often name their own price for their labor.

Americans and their representatives should be aware of these differentials as they craft public policies and such things as public-employee union contracts — and bailouts for banks — in future years.