



Public-private pay gap increases to 26 percent

Federal employee pay has been a target in cost-cutting efforts by the President and Congress, aided by a public perception of feds as overpaid "fat cats." Claims about public vs. private pay have swung widely - from the [Federal Salary Council's data](#) that shows feds are paid 24 percent less than the private sector, to a [Cato Institute report](#) that says feds are paid double the private sector. What's the reality? Federal News Radio brings you interviews and analysis on the [federal pay debate](#).

11/4/2011

By [Jolie Lee](#)

Federal News Radio

Federal employees make on average 26 percent less than their private sector counterparts.

The National Federation of Federal Employees said the Bureau of Labor Statistics report on Friday shows a "substantial disparity" in private-public pay.

"Federal employees have known for years that lower pay was one of the many sacrifices they made by choosing to serve their country. This may however come as a surprise to those in Congress calling for draconian cuts to federal pay and benefits as a means to 'bring federal compensation more in line with the private sector.' The reality is that bringing federal compensation practices in line with the private sector would require a hefty pay increase for federal workers," said NFFE President William Dougan in a statement.

The pay gap announcement came during a BLS report to the [Federal Salary Council](#), which determines locality pay each year.

Last year's pay gap was [24 percent](#). Federal employees are in the midst of a two-year pay freeze that started in 2011.

The growing gap is "not surprising" considering the pay freeze, said Colleen Kelley, president of the National Treasury Employees Union, in a statement.

"Clearly, that is a substantial contribution by federal employees, who should not be asked to make further sacrifices — such as cuts to their benefits, increased pension contributions with no boost in their annuity and detrimental changes in their pension calculation formula — unless and until those at the top of our economic system have made an appropriate contribution to deficit reduction," Kelley said.

Despite the BLS report, some lawmakers are calling for an extension of the current pay freeze. House Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) recommended to the supercommittee to [extend the pay freeze through 2015](#). And the Senate Homeland Security Committee [recommended one more year of the freeze](#).