

INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY

Good News: 35% of Government Workers Might Quite If Trump Wins

November 1, 2016

Big Government: A new survey finds that more than a third of federal workers are threatening to quit their jobs should Donald Trump prevail in the presidential election. If only that were true.

A survey of federal employees by the [Government Business Council](#) and [GovExec.com](#) found that 14% said they would "definitely" consider quitting their jobs if Trump wins the election on Nov. 8, another 13% said they might consider it. Just 65% said they'd stay on at their jobs no matter who wins.

Whatever Trump's many flaws, that's an awfully tempting reason to cast a ballot for him. Except for the fact that these workers will almost certainly decide to keep their jobs no matter who wins, if for no other reason than most of them would probably find jobs in the private sector utterly intolerable.

As Dr. Stantz put it in "Ghostbusters," "You don't know what it's like out there! I've *worked* in the private sector. They expect *results!*"

The simple truth is that federal workers are paid far more than their private sector counterparts when you combine wages and benefits. A 2012 Congressional Budget Office report found that federal workers with a high school diploma or less made 36% more than similarly educated workers in the private sector. For people with a bachelor's degree, the gap was 15%.

A more recent analysis by the [Cato Institute](#) found that federal employees make 76% more than private sector workers. Using data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Cato report found that the average federal employee pulls down \$123,160 a year in pay and benefits, compared with \$69,901 in the private sector. It also found that this gap had increased since the 1990s, when it was 39%.

What's more, federal workers put in less time than private sector workers. As we noted in this space previously, government data show that employees in local, state and federal governments are 38% more likely to take time off work for illness or personal reasons, and miss 50% more hours than private sector workers.

It's also nearly impossible to fire a federal worker, no matter what the reason, as various government audits have shown.

One Government Accountability Office report, for example, found that 99.5% of federal workers got a "fully successful" rating or above. More than a third got a rating of "outstanding." Even if they do horrible things on the job, many of them just get put on "paid administrative leave." Another GAO report said that the government spent more than \$3 billion in just two years for what amounted to paid vacations. It found that hundreds of federal workers had gotten a year or more of paid leave.

Two employees implicated in the Veterans Health Administration scandal — which involved bureaucratic attempts to hide chronic, and at times deadly, delays in treating veterans — were put on paid leave, and then later got new jobs at the VA.

So don't believe that any of these workers will actually quit in disgust should Trump win. Most will no doubt swallow their pride and go back to doing what they've been doing, which is next to nothing.

That isn't to say that a President Trump couldn't force these employees to live up to their promise by cutting the federal workforce by 35%, while demanding that the rest actually do their jobs.