

## Letter: U.S. needs strong federal work force

Staff Reports

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The concern in the Oct. 7 article "Duncan: Cut deficit by clamping down on early retirement for federal workers" is misplaced. Instead of worrying about changing laws to make our federal employees work more years, we should be more concerned about the hostile plans in Congress at the moment that are causing an early exodus of our nation's most experienced and knowledgeable employees.

There is a troubling sentiment in America, and now in the News Sentinel, that our country can make do without a strong federal work force. This thinking overlooks the vital work of our food safety inspectors, nuclear regulators, border patrol agents and countless other federal employees across the country who protect and move our country forward.

This sentiment partly stems from biased Cato Institute claims that the average federal employee is paid more than the average private-sector employee. This is very flawed.

Even though Cato ignores the fact that nearly half of federal employees have bachelor's degrees versus fewer than one in five in the private sector, the federal government does not when paying our federal workers.

The decisions the congressional "super committee" has to make are too important to be jaded by bad data that turns our federal employees into national scapegoats.



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