



WASHINGTON, Aug. 10, 2010

Federal Salaries Soaring Above Private Sector

USA Today Analysis Shows Average Government Workers' Pay Growing Faster than Private Employees' Salaries

By Sharyl Attkisson



Federal employees' pay and benefits averaged \$123,049 in 2009, up 36.9 percent since 2000. Private workers averaged \$61,051, up just 8.8 percent during the same time. (CBS)

(CBS) For those fortunate enough to have a job in this tough economy, there's a growing gap in salary between government employees and those who work for private companies.

While many Americans have suffered pay cuts or job losses, one group is bucking the trend: federal workers, **CBS News Investigative Correspondent Sharyl Attkisson** reports. A USA Today analysis finds that federal employees have gotten bigger pay and benefit increases than private employees for nine years straight.

"It made me think, man, I should be a federal employee," one woman said on the streets of the capital.

Federal salaries have grown 33 percent faster than inflation. Their pay and benefits averaged \$123,049 in 2009, up 36.9 percent since 2000. Private workers averaged \$61,051, up just 8.8 percent during the same time.

"So you have Wall Street, you have big oil and now you have federal civilians," said Tad Dehaven, a budget analyst for the [Cato Institute](#).

And the bonuses are flowing. **CBS News** has learned taxpayer dollars funded \$95.8 million in Transportation Security Administration bonuses last year, including a \$35,400 bonus for the head of the agency.

"They're really overpaid," one man said on the streets of the capital.

Federal employees see things differently.

"I definitely don't think I'm paid too much," one such worker said.

Defenders of federal salaries say they reflect the higher skills and education often required for their jobs, and many are paid more because they've stuck with their jobs so long.

President Obama has ordered a freeze on bonuses for 2,900 political appointees and wants the smallest pay hike in more than a decade for two million other federal workers: 1.4 percent.

©MMX, CBS Interactive Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Connect with CBS News [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [X](#)