

Only CBS Reports on Salary Gap Between Public and Private Employees

By Kyle Drennen ([Bio](#) | [Archive](#))
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While ABC and NBC ignored a Monday [USA Today report](#) that found a significant gap in compensation between public and private sector employees, on Tuesday's CBS Evening News, correspondent Sharyl Attkisson provided a full story: "While many Americans have suffered pay cuts or job losses, one group is bucking the trend – federal workers."

Attkisson described how the "analysis finds that federal employees have gotten bigger pay and benefit increases than private employees for nine years straight." She cited numbers from the report: "Federal salaries have grown 33% faster than inflation. Their pay and benefits average \$123,000, up 37% since 2000. Private workers average \$61,000, up just 8.8% over the same time."

In addition, Attkisson included a sound bite from Cato Institute budget analyst Tad Dehaven: "So you have Wall Street, you have big oil, and now you have federal civilians." She went to note: "And the bonuses are flowing. CBS News has learned your tax dollars funded \$95.8 million in airport security TSA bonuses last year. A \$35,000 bonus to the head of the agency."

In concluding her report, Attkisson gave the public sector perspective: "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." She added: "President Obama has ordered a freeze on bonuses for 3,000 political appointees and is asking for the smallest pay hike in more than a decade for 2 million other federal workers, 1.4%."

Given that the poor economy, government spending, and the deficit are key issues in the midterm elections, it's interesting that neither ABC or NBC deemed a story about overpaid government workers to be worthy of coverage.

[Here is a full transcript of Attkisson's August 10 report](#)

6:39PM ET

KATIE COURIC: 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 in the private sector. More on that now from Sharyl Attkisson.

SHARYL ATTKISSON: While many Americans have suffered pay cuts or job losses, one group is bucking the trend – federal workers. A USA Today analysis finds that federal employees have gotten bigger pay and benefit increases than private employees for nine years straight.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It made me think, man, I should be a federal employee.

ATTKISSON: Federal salaries have grown 33% faster than inflation. Their pay and benefits average \$123,000, up 37% since 2000. Private workers average \$61,000, up just 8.8% over the same time.

TAD DEHAVEN [BUDGET ANALYST, CATO INSTITUTE]: So you have Wall Street, you have big oil, and now you have federal civilians.

ATTKISSON: And the bonuses are flowing. CBS News has learned your tax dollars funded \$95.8 million in airport security TSA bonuses last year. A \$35,000 bonus to the head of the agency.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: They're really overpaid.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Right now everything should be – should be a freeze across the board until we really get the economy back up and running.

ATTKISSON: Federal employees see things differently.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I definitely don't think I'm being paid too much.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I think I'm paid a fair wage, definitely.

ATTKISSON: 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.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I've been working for the government 21 years.

ATTKISSON: President Obama has ordered a freeze on bonuses for 3,000 political appointees and is asking for the smallest pay hike in more than a decade for 2 million other federal workers, 1.4%. Katie?

COURIC: Sharyl Attkisson. Sharyl, thank you very much.

—*Kyle Drennen is a news analyst at the Media Research Center. You can follow him on Twitter [here](#).*