



Poll: Feds earn too much dough

By Brian Kalish bkalish@govexec.com September 3, 2010

Most voters believe federal workers are overpaid, according to a new [survey](#) from Rasmussen Reports.

Of the 1,000 respondents surveyed by telephone on Aug. 29 and 30, 54 percent said federal workers are overpaid, 24 percent said they aren't overpaid and 22 percent said they are not sure. The margin of error was 3 percent.

"That's a lot of people that seem to have a strong opinion," said Chris Edwards, an economist at the Cato Institute, a liberation think tank, which has [issued reports](#) arguing federal workers earn too much money.

Edwards said he recently has noticed a lot more interest in this issue since he began monitoring it in 2006, most likely because of the economic recession.

The issue of federal pay is striking a chord with people because of the overall lack of salary increases in the labor market, Edwards said.

According to the poll, respondents who identified themselves as Democrats were about evenly split on federal pay. Thirty-nine percent said federal workers are overpaid, while 40 percent said they are not, and 21 percent are not sure. Sixty-four percent of Republican respondents said federal workers earn too much money, while 17 percent said they are not overpaid, and 20 percent are unsure. Sixty-nine percent of self-identified conservatives said feds are overpaid, according to the poll.

In August, Office of Personnel and Management Director John Berry said the current federal workforce is highly specialized. "The wages we pay are fair and the benefits we offer are good," he said in a statement. OPM did not return a call on Friday seeking new comment.

In May, Congress voted down proposals to freeze federal salaries. In the House, a proposal by Rep. Michele Bachmann, R-Minn., would have eliminated the proposed 1.4 percent pay hike President

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Obama requested for 2011.

The new poll results are similar to a May survey by Hart Research Associates, which found 67 percent of respondents believed a major source of government waste is inefficient federal employees receiving generous benefits or high salaries.



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