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Pay gap grows in private sector's favor, council says

By STEPHEN LOSEY | Last Updated: November 4, 2011

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The pay advantage private-sector employees enjoy over federal employees grew 2.25 percentage points this year, bringing the pay gap to 26.3 percent, the Federal Salary Council said Friday.

The pay scale freeze that began in 2011 helped cause the widening of the reported pay gap, the council's pay gap methodology working group said. The council includes three experts in labor relations and pay policy, and six representatives of employee organizations representing large numbers of General Schedule employees. National Treasury Employees Union President Colleen Kelley and American Federation of Government Employees National Secretary-Treasurer J. David Cox are among its members.

The council's findings are diametrically opposed to several studies published in the last two years that claim federal employees earn much more than private-sector workers.

Critics such as the Cato Institute and some federal pay experts say that the government's claims of a widening pay gap are unbelievable with the economy still ailing and the job market remaining extremely soft.

The council said that the Washington and Miami areas were the only localities that showed declines in the pay gap. Washington's pay gap dropped 1.5 percentage points, and Miami's gap dropped almost 1.7 percentage points.

The council also recommended adding new locality pay areas for Albany, N.Y.; Albuquerque, N.M.; Bakersfield, Calif.; Charlotte, N.C.; and Harrisburg, Pa. The President's Pay Agent, an interagency council of top agency and labor leaders that advises the White House on pay issues, is expected to decide in the next few months whether any of those areas will get their own locality pay in 2013.

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Zoopy wrote:

So did they report *pay* gap, or *compensation* gap? I think most of us can agree that compensation, not just cash salary, is a more appropriate thing to measure, because it captures differences in retirement and health benefit costs.

And did it compare average pay for the entire geography, or also break it down by job details (profession, seniority, level of education, job title, etc.)? Given the differences in the



Federal employees

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mix of work done by federal and private, whole-workforce comparisons seem pretty pointless.

11/4/2011 11:06:09 AM

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MENTALLECT123 wrote:

I am just as curious to see the gap between Defense Contractor salaries and Federal Worker salaries. That gap may be even more lopsided.

11/4/2011 10:30:31 AM

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