

ROBERT J. WITTMAN
1ST DISTRICT, VIRGINIA



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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2018

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The Honorable Dr. Jeff T.H. Pon
Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Dr. Pon:

I am writing to express opposition to the letter you sent to Speaker Paul Ryan on May 4, 2018 in which you recommend cutting benefits of federal employees through legislative proposals.

As a Member of Congress with a significant number of federal workers and federal retirees in my district, I have witnessed many of these same proposals already considered and rejected over the past several years. Approximately 30.9% of the federal civilian workforce consists of veterans. Recycling discredited proposals targeting federal workers is disruptive to them, and demoralizing to all middle-class civilian workers.

Federal employees have already sacrificed. They were subject to a three-year pay freeze from 2011 through 2013, which the CBO estimates will save \$98 billion over ten years. From 2014 through 2016, federal employees received lower Cost-of-Living (COLAs) than required by law, saving \$62 billion. Congress has twice increased required employee contributions to the federal retirement programs for another estimated \$21 billion in savings. And in 2013, over 750,000 federal employees were furloughed due to sequestration cuts, which is estimated to have cost federal employees over \$1 billion in lost wages in 2013 alone. In total, these combined shared sacrifices by federal workers have amounted to \$182 billion since 2010.

These legislative proposals would increase the amount federal employees pay toward their retirement fund and is equitable to a permanent pay cut. Your proposals also call for the reduction or elimination of COLAs for current and future retirees in the Federal Employment Retirement System (FERS). By law, FERS COLAs are already required to be reduced below what is provided under Social Security. The proposal eliminating supplements for employees who retire before they collect Social Security at age 62 penalizes our federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers who are forced to retire early due to the physically demanding nature of their jobs.

I understand that we are currently fighting to reduce our crippling deficit and debt problem, however this should not be on the backs of our federal workforce. The federal workforce is full of dedicated and committed citizens who exemplify patriotism in everything they do, and I am proud to represent the tens

of thousands of federal employees and retirees who live in the First District of Virginia. Therefore, I respectfully ask that you reject these legislative proposals, and I look forward to working with you in the future to find ways to reduce our nation's debt.

Thank you for considering my views,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Wittman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress