

## AFGE TRUTH SQUAD

Setting the facts straight about federal employees

**The Lie:** Federal workers can't be fired.

**Fact:** In fiscal 2009, 11,275 federal employees were fired for poor performance or misconduct, according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. In addition, many more employees voluntarily leave after they are counseled that their performance is unacceptable, according to a survey of federal managers by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board.

Source: <http://www.fedscope.opm.gov/>, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/03/AR2010120303160\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/03/AR2010120303160_pf.html)

**The Lie:** Federal workers are overpaid.

**Fact:** Private-sector employees earn 24% more than federal employees performing comparable jobs, according to objective salary surveys by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Some of the largest pay gaps are in large metropolitan areas where most federal employees work, including 36% in Washington, D.C., and 26% in New York City.

Source: <http://www.opm.gov/oca/fsc/recommendation10.pdf>

**The Lie:** Federal employees pay almost nothing for their health insurance.

**Fact:** Federal employees pay, on average, 30% of their health insurance premiums, plus hefty copayments and deductibles. They choose from among several national plans and regional HMOs. Federal employees pay 32%-33% of the premium for Blue Cross/Blue Shield Standard, the most common choice. The costs for federal employees are so high that more than 200,000 go without insurance altogether because they can't afford the premiums.

Source: <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health/rates/nonpostalffs2011.pdf>

**The Lie:** The federal work force is bigger than ever.

**Fact:** The federal government employed 2.1 million Executive Branch workers as of September 2010, slightly less than the number on board 40 years ago when Richard Nixon was president. The size of the federal work force has steadily declined, relative to the American population that federal workers serve. In 1953, there was one federal worker for every 78 U.S. residents; by 2008, there was one federal employee for every 155 residents.

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2011/assets/management.pdf>

**The Lie:** Cutting the federal work force will help reduce the deficit.

**Fact:** Cutting government jobs doesn't cut government spending. Spending increased during the Clinton administration, even as the federal work force was downsized. Cutting federal jobs pushes more work to private-sector contractors, who cost more than federal employees and are less accountable to taxpayers. Even if the government cut 10 percent of its work force and hired no new contractors, the savings would total less than one half of one percent of the deficit.

Source: [http://www.fiscalcommission.gov/sites/fiscalcommission.gov/files/documents/TheMomentofTruth12\\_1\\_2010.pdf](http://www.fiscalcommission.gov/sites/fiscalcommission.gov/files/documents/TheMomentofTruth12_1_2010.pdf)

**The Lie:** Federal pay freezes will help balance the budget.

**Fact:** The savings from freezing federal employees' wages for the next two years amounts to less than one-half of one percent of one year's federal deficit – and that's using the inflated figures that were at the foundation of the pay freeze, which assumed far larger raises than employees were likely to receive.

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/11/29/fact-sheet-cutting-deficit-freezing-federal-employee-pay>

**The Lie:** Federal employees enjoy fat-cat pensions at taxpayers' expense.

**Fact:** Most federal employees are in the Federal Employees Retirement System, which has three components: a modest traditional pension funded jointly by the agency and the employee, Social Security and a 401 (k)-type plan. Workers who retire under FERS get an average monthly pension of just \$944, less than \$12,000 per year.

Source: <http://www.tsptalk.com/mb/archive/index.php/t-5035.html>

**The Lie:** Contracting out federal work saves taxpayers money.

**Fact:** Federal contractors earn far more than the federal employees whose jobs they have taken over. There are 2.1 million federal workers but at least 17 million private-sector contractors, who can earn 450% more than the highest-paid federal worker.

Source: <http://www.brookings.edu/qs/cps/light20030905.pdf>;  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement\\_index\\_exec\\_comp/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement_index_exec_comp/)

**The Lie:** Federal workers get automatic pay increases every year.

**Fact:** Most federal workers do receive a basic across-the-board pay raise each year that mirrors pay increases in the private sector. However, the raise is not automatic – it's contingent on the existence of a measured gap between federal and private-sector salaries, and approval by the president and Congress. Employees received no pay raise in 1986 and will receive no increase in 2011 or 2012.

Source: [http://www.fedtools.com/cqi-local/SoftCart.exe/online-store/scstore/products/p-2011Almanac\\_paperback.html?L+scstore+zctc3583ffe5b6e5+1303217640](http://www.fedtools.com/cqi-local/SoftCart.exe/online-store/scstore/products/p-2011Almanac_paperback.html?L+scstore+zctc3583ffe5b6e5+1303217640)

**The Lie:** Most federal workers are unskilled paper pushers.

**Fact:** Most federal workers hold white-collar professional, administrative and technical jobs that require a higher level of education than most private-sector jobs. About 20% of federal workers have a master's degree, professional degree or doctorate, compared to just 13% in the private sector, according to Census Bureau data. More than half of all federal workers have at least a college degree, compared to 35 percent of private-sector employees.

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2011/assets/management.pdf>

**The Lie:** Federal workers are lazy and not as productive as private-sector employees.

**Fact:** The American public is very satisfied with the level of service federal employees provide. According to the American Customer Satisfaction Index's January survey, taxpayers gave satisfaction scores of 90 or above (out of 100) to the Veterans Affairs Department and the Social Security Administration.

Source: [http://www.theacsi.org/index2.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=238&pop=1&page](http://www.theacsi.org/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=238&pop=1&page)

**For more straight facts about federal workers, visit [www.afgetruthsquad.com](http://www.afgetruthsquad.com)**