

Alert!

Chapter 52
National Treasury
Employees Union

June, 2004

Conference Coming on Key Bill

Fedweek, June 16, 2004

The Senate hopes to finish work soon on its version of the fiscal 2004 Defense Department authorization measure, setting up a conference with the House that will have to address several long-running and contentious issues of major importance to civilian employees of DoD. The bill also sets a marker for the January 2005 federal employee pay raises; both versions (HR-4200 and S-2400) would put the January 2005 military raise at 3.5 percent, which will be the target figure for backers of pay parity to attempt to achieve in separate spending bills that will set the federal raise. Final Senate voting has been delayed for several weeks due to the need to work through numerous amendments.

White House Repeats Raise Position

FedWeek, June 9, 2004

The Bush administration, in a report on managing federal spending, has reiterated its stance against across-the-board federal raises and in favor of raises more targeted to performance and labor markets. The workforce is diverse and "deserves a targeted approach to setting and adjusting pay rates; an across-the-board pay increase will not achieve the desired result because it may be too small an increase where we do have workforce needs and too large an increase where we do not." Agencies are "linking the performance expectations of their leaders and managers to the agency's goals and are cascading those performance expectations throughout their organizations. The President and Congress are working to determine the pay policy that best allows agencies to target specific personnel needs and opportunities, and gives agencies better tools with which to address skill gaps and recruit, retain, and reward the quality people they need to accomplish their missions," the report said.

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Timeline:

- June 21, First day of Summer
- June 30, End of TSF open season
- July 5, Fourth of July Holiday

Work on Key Spending Measures Begins

FedWeek, June 9, 2004

With the House having passed a budget outline for the upcoming fiscal year (S.Con.Res 95)-a Senate vote has been delayed over budget rules issues-work has begun on the appropriations bills that will contain the actual funding and policy directions for fiscal 2005. The process could move more quickly than usual this year, since appropriators are off to a late start and working time is short in an election year. The Transportation-Treasury appropriations measure likely will be where the debate over the January 2005 federal raise plays out; in the past, employee-friendly legislators have added language to that bill setting the raise higher than the White House recommended. That could occur again this year, as backers of "pay parity" with military personnel seek to boost the recommended 1.5 percent federal raise to the 3.5 percent slated for the military.

The next action on the 2005 federal raise likely will occur in the House, which in March passed a non-binding measure supporting "pay parity." The budget resolution from which appropriators are working does not include similar language, but during House voting on that resolution, Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., head of the Government Reform Committee, engaged in a "colloquy" with the head of the Budget Committee, Rep. Jim Nussle, R-Iowa, noting that the pay parity measure had passed with 299 votes and asking if parity is the position of the House. Nussle replied in the affirmative. Such exchanges define the intent of the House and act as precedent-and political cover-for later action.

The White House's budget proposal, in calling for a 1.5 percent general raise, also advocated spending \$500 million on performance-based pay, with some of it built into agency budgets and the remainder to be divvied up from the "human capital performance fund" that Congress created-but did not fund-last year. But prospects for that proposal are questionable, since Congress has not held any hearings this year on pay-for-performance and skepticism remains on Capitol Hill regarding the fairness and accuracy of performance measures.

Group Recommends Switch to Pay Banding

FedWeek, June 16, 2004

The National Academy of Public Administration, an advisory group of experts whose views often carry much weight on civil service issues, has recommended switching the entire general schedule to a pay banding arrangement, in which grades are combined and managers have greater leeway in setting starting salaries and in advancing employees for performance or other reasons. NAPA in a recent report recommended a five-year changeover to pay bands that would be "aligned with prevailing market pay rates, for several broad occupation groups" and with raises based on labor market conditions. Locality pay should continue "in some situations" but it will be less prominent once salary

bands are better aligned to labor markets, the group said, and pay-for-performance decisions "should be based on salary budgets, performance ratings and agency policies." The recommendation comes at a time when two major departments, Defense and Homeland Security, are working to draft new personnel systems that will feature pay banding with pay-for-performance as central elements-although federal unions and some in Congress question the government's ability to perform the kind of job market surveys that would be needed and say its performance measures are not reliable enough to link pay more closely to performance.

Private Tax Collection Legislation

The House of Representatives today passed a corporate tax bill, H.R. 4520, by a vote of 251 to 178. The bill included a provision that would allow the IRS to use private collection agencies to collect tax debt. Despite bipartisan objections to the provision, no amendments to exclude it were allowed. The Senate has passed a companion bill that would allow the use of private collection agencies for a maximum of five years. The two bills, which contain many other controversial provisions, must now go to a Conference Committee to resolve the differences between the two bills and be passed again by both Houses of Congress and signed by the President before becoming law. It is unclear whether the differences in the bills will be able to be resolved in the short time remaining in the current Congress. NTEU will continue to fight this provision in conference and, if necessary, in Treasury Appropriations bills.



THE FUNDS – TSP Rates of Return

Rates of Return were updated on **June 1, 2004**.

	G Fund	F Fund	C Fund	S Fund	I Fund
May 2004	0.39%	(0.50%)	1.37%	1.50%	0.30%
<u>Last 12 Months*</u> (6/1/2003 - 5/31/2004)	4.10%	(0.60%)	18.20%	28.70%	31.70%

* The G, F, C, S, and I Fund returns for the last 12 months assume unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month, and assume that earnings are compounded on a monthly basis

Around the Office

By Alert! editor Mick Eskew

- The move to the new San Antonio POD is completed but it didn't go without its hitches. Everyone has a war story to tell about one thing or another. It will take awhile for everyone to adjust; hopefully this will include the other tenants who seemed to be overwhelmed.
- To all Tesoro Building employees and those who may come to visit, park your vehicle only in the spaces marked "Reserved", on the Northwest corner of the property. These are the spaces provided to us through the lease secured by GSA. Employees who continue to park elsewhere may cause the landlord to go to a parking sticker requirement to identify those not in the correct spaces. I don't think anyone would want that. More immediate action may include towing at the owner's expense and possible disciplinary action. Please respect the other tenant's rights.
- When we first moved in there was one major problem and that was with the air-conditioning or the lack of actually. The Union office got several calls and became involved; Facilities manager Armando Sanchez was eager to solve the problem and quick to respond. A walk around the office spaces was organized with the Union, Facilities and the Building Manager to determine what was going on with the A/C. We eventually determined, after taking to a contractor, that some of the A/C sensors were in parts of the building not yet occupied. Therefore those unoccupied spaces (no warm bodies or machinery) were at a comfortable level. Unfortunately the occupied areas (with warm bodies and computers) were sweating. A fix was made to accommodate the warm bodies. Once all divisions are moved in and more warm bodies show up the A/C should work as designed. If you have concerns about the office temperature contact Audrey or Connie, please do not contact the building manager.
- As many of you already know two Revenue Officers have recently been terminated. Union President Tom Jones has already sent both cases forward to the Union Attorney for arbitration. The fight is not over. A member came into the office concerned about the removals and made an astute observation, "If management can do this, then just think what would happen to us if we didn't have the Union to protect us?" Good question! So why isn't everyone a Union member? Another good question!
- Do you know what your manager's role and responsibilities are? If not, then read through their portion of the manual; IRM 1.4.1 can be found through the intranet. Here is a portion directly from IRM 1.4.1.2.

Managers are primarily responsible for:

- a. the development, performance, and conduct of each supervisory, technical, and non-technical employee working for them;
- b. the performance and conduct of each employee who directly reports to them;
- c. clearly defining goals and courses of action to subordinates, and following up to ensure that these are carried out.
- d. the well-being and progress of the personnel in their groups;
- e. fostering good working relationships;
- f. displaying integrity in all actions; and
- g. displaying proper attitude and behavior, job knowledge, and effective communication to build good working relationships thereby motivating people to accomplish programs and meet objectives.

- If you have news about your POD and wish to share it with others please email or fax your article to the San Antonio Union Office. We would like to hear more from the other PODs.

TOM'S HUMOR PAGE

A boy and his money

A little boy wanted \$100.00 very badly and prayed for weeks, but nothing happened. Then he decided to write God a letter requesting the \$100.00.



When the postal authorities received the letter to God, USA, they decided to send it to the President.

The President was so amused that he instructed his secretary to send the little boy a \$5.00 bill. The President thought this would appear to be a lot of money to a little boy.

The little boy was delighted with the \$5.00 bill and sat down to write a thank-you note to God, which read:

Dear God: Thank you very much for sending the money. However, I noticed that for some reason you sent it through Washington, D.C., and, as usual, those turkeys deducted \$95.00 in taxes.

Ice Fishing

It was a cold winter day, when an old man walked out onto a frozen lake, cut a hole in the ice, dropped in his fishing line and began waiting for a fish to bite. He was there for almost an hour without even a nibble when a young boy walked out onto the ice, cut a hole in the ice not too far from the old man and dropped in his fishing line.

It only took about a minute and WHAM! A largemouth bass hit his hook and the boy pulled in the fish. The old man couldn't believe it but figured it was just luck. But, the boy dropped in his line and again within just a few minutes pulled in another one. This went on and on until finally the old man couldn't take it any more since he hadn't caught a thing all this time. He went to the boy and said, "Son, I've been here for over an hour without even a nibble. You have been here only a few minutes and have about half a dozen fish! How do you do it?"

The boy responded, "Roo faf roo reep ra rums rram." What was that, the old man asked? Again the boy responded "Roo faf roo reep ra rums rram."

"Look," said the old man, "I can't understand a word you are saying." So, the boy spit out his mouth full, and said, "You have to keep the worms warm!"

Chapter 52 Alert!, all the news that is fit to be copied!

This **Chapter 52 Alert!** along with all other **Alerts!** since January 2001, can be found on our Chapter Web Page at <http://www.nteu52.org/> You can e-mail any Chapter officer, staff member or steward from this site.

Chapter 52 Board:

President, Tom Jones

Executive Vice President, Patricia Kelley

VP Area A & Chief Steward, Bill Grace

VP Area B & Asst. Chief Steward, Mick Eskew

VP of Finance & Recordation, Fran Dunagin

Send comments and/or articles to:
8700 Tesoro Dr. Stop 1700SANC
San Antonio, Texas 78217
fax 210-841-2044, attention Alert!
Editor/Compiler Mick Eskew

