

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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October 17, 2007

Hon. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Chair
House Legislative Appropriations Subcommittee
H-147, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Mary Landrieu, Chair
Senate Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee
135 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairs,

As President of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), I am writing regarding the Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08) Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. As you move toward crafting a final conference report, IFPTE would like to bring the issue of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) workers' Cost of Living Allowances (COLAs) to your attention.

As you are both well aware, the Analysts at GAO recently voted overwhelmingly to form a union under the IFPTE umbrella. A central issue that led the workers at GAO toward unionization was the denial of COLAs to over 300 GAO workers in the Fiscal Year 2006 (FY06) and slightly fewer in FY07. This pay cut was implemented after the Comptroller General (CG) assured the House Federal Workforce Subcommittee that within the GAO pay-banding system all of the workers would be guaranteed at least the COLA. Unfortunately however that turned out to not be the case for some workers.

Through various FY08 spending and authorization bills, this year's Congress has voted in a bipartisan fashion to provide both civilian and military personnel with a 3.5% COLA increase in FY08. While the Administration remains opposed to the 3.5% increase for military and civilian workers, IFPTE, which represents tens of thousands federal workers, remains hopeful that Congress will eventually approve the 3.5% increase. With your help, we are also hopeful that the GAO workers will enjoy the very same COLA increase that all other civilian and military personnel will receive.

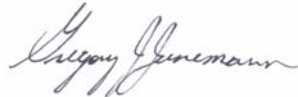
It is IFPTE's belief that regardless of what pay system applies to any federal agency, all Civil Servants should receive the Congressionally mandated COLA. For this reason IFPTE asks that you include language in the final FY08 Legislative Branch appropriations bill requiring that all GAO workers receive the COLA, whatever it ends up being. Specifically, IFPTE would suggest legislative language aimed at de-funding the CGs ability to use funds in the FY08 Legislative Branch appropriations bill toward denying any GAO worker the COLA. We feel that such language will essentially prevent the hundreds of denials of COLAs that have been experienced in past years.

IFPTE would also request that the CG determine the number of employees and amount of COLAs denied in past years and report to Congress on efforts to honor the Congress' intent that all federal employees receive the COLA in both FY06 and FY07. Further, IFPTE believes that it is essential that COLAs and other pay increases be effective the first pay period of the calendar year to ensure that employees get their full increases. In FY07 the CG, in effect, reduced GAO employees' annual pay increases by delaying the effective dates of the pay adjustments by 6-weeks. This amounted to a pay cut and should be avoided in FY08 and beyond.

In closing, IFPTE also wants to briefly express our support for adequate overall funding for GAO. We realize that due to extremely tight budgetary circumstances faced by Appropriators this year it has been difficult for both the House (\$503.3 million proposal) and Senate (\$510.3 million proposal) Subcommittees, respectively, to meet CG Walker's requested \$522.8 million budget request. However, the union is concerned that in order for GAO workers to continue to provide Congress with top-notch services that there needs to be a bottom line number that is reflective of that goal. In this regard, IFPTE is hopeful that appropriators will find their way toward approving as close to the \$522.8 million CG requested number as possible during these fiscally difficult times.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me, or IFPTE Legislative Director Matt Biggs at, (301) 565-9016.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Junemann,
President

Cc: Sen. Daniel Akaka
Sen. Joe Lieberman
Sen. Susan Collins
Sen. Dick Durbin
Sen. Barbara Mikuslski
Rep. Danny Davis
Rep. Eleanor Holmes-Norton
Rep. Henry Waxman
Leader Steny Hoyer