

Libertarians call federal worker pay gap 'appalling'

Recent data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis show that federal government workers get compensation, on average, more than twice as high as private-sector workers. That gap has expanded dramatically over the last decade. Libertarian Party Chair Mark Hinkle released the following statement today:

"The numbers are appalling. In 2009, the average private-sector worker received \$61,051 in total compensation, but the average federal government worker received \$123,049. There is no excuse for this enormous, and growing, compensation gap.

"I guess you just can't beat a federal job. Very high pay, unbelievable benefits, extremely generous retirement plans, and near-perfect job security.

"And those retirement plans are often unfunded pensions, which will have to be paid by taxing our children and grandchildren, who never had the opportunity to vote when they were created.

"Apparently wishing to add insult to injury, government employee union reps have claimed that federal workers are entitled to their sky-high compensation because they are more educated and skilled than the rest of us. I have had many personal experiences with federal employees that indicate the exact opposite.

"The problem is that federal worker compensation is not set by the free market -- it's set by government fiat, which causes it to be artificially generous. Another factor is the monopoly government employee unions, which are able to extort that compensation up to even higher levels.

"One sure sign that federal employees

overpaid is that they never quit. Tad DeHaven of the Cato Institute has noted, '...in 2009, private sector employees quit at a rate that was more than eight times higher than federal employees.... This indicates that federal employees recognize that the generous combination of wages, benefits, and job security is hard to match in the private sector, so they stay put.'

"Libertarians support minimum government and maximum freedom. Unfortunately, federal employees have incentives to make government bigger, which makes us less free. With government employment paying more than the private sector, the rational self-interest of many workers will drive them to seek employment with the federal government.

"That's a formula for disaster.

"Libertarians want productive people working in the private sector to build our economy, not working for the government and hurting our economy.

"I would like to see an across-the-board pay cut for all federal workers. That would reduce federal spending, reduce the deficit, and reduce the insult to American private-sector workers. It also just might encourage some federal government employees to quit their jobs and seek more productive work in the private sector."

The Libertarian Party stands for free markets and civil liberties. You can find more information at www.LP.org



Steven Slater and Narratives of Conflict

Darian Worden | Guest Writer
CENTER FOR A STATELESS SOCIETY

Flight attendant Steven Slater quickly became a minor celebrity after his dramatic exit from a plane at Kennedy International Airport.

Following an argument with a passenger, the attendant delivered an angry speech over the plane's public address system, grabbed a beer, opened the emergency chute, then slid out of the plane and went home.

The New York Times characterizes the incident as "the latest round in what is seen as an increasingly hostile relationship between airlines and passengers" ("Fed-Up Flight Attendant Makes Sliding Exit," August 9, 2010).

Official narratives of conflict can conceal the true conflict behind an event. Though it's hard to be sure what happened from sketchy and seemingly contradictory news reports, it's more likely that the incident was a notable flare-up between people who treat others as human beings, and jerks who don't. In the New York Times version, a passenger ignored Slater's instructions to wait until the plane stopped to retrieve her luggage. She could have addressed his concerns, possibly explaining why she needed her luggage immediately. Instead she ignored Slater and hit him in the head with her luggage as if he was just an obstacle in the way. She reportedly got offended when an apology was asked for.

Retail and service workers are often not viewed as individuals. They are regarded as machines in place to get the customer what he wants, no matter what the customer's attitude. Any humanness they exhibit becomes an obstacle in the way of getting what the customer wants.

Everyday dehumanization leads to raging out. Air rage, road rage, and plain old general disgruntlement are often the result of offense at some injustice. Saying "I'm not gonna take it anymore" often means reclaiming some measure of humanity.

Unfortunately, getting angry can create a vicious cycle where innocent people become the focus of anger that they didn't cause, which in turn motivates them to behave angrily toward others.

But those who cause legitimate rage should be stood up to: the assholes with authority, the ones who tell you to put on a happy face and get back to work, the ones who tell you to refrain

from showing any emotion that doesn't fit the official ambiance. Especially the ones who tell you to unconditionally back down from bullies. Backing down not only gives bullies (those who use some kind of rank to exert power over others) free rein to treat people like dirt, but it will probably mean that your rage will be transferred to target someone lower in the hierarchy -- someone who might not deserve it.

With constant submission to petty power trips, occupations that could be adventurous, instructive, or otherwise interesting ways to make a living become processes that reduce the worker to an automaton. Causing a scene and grabbing a drink on your way out the emergency chute might just be a rational way to deal with that kind of nonsense.

Low Cost Cat Spay/Neuter Assistance

AnimalKind of Kansas City has partnered with St. Joseph Animal Control & Rescue to offer low cost spay/neuter for cats.

Every year hundreds of cats are euthanized at the local shelter due to a shortage of good homes.

The best and most humane way to prevent the unnecessary and unfortunate euthanasia of innocent cats is to prevent their birth in the first place. An unsprayed cat can produce up to three or four litters per year.

Residents from the 64501, 64502, and 64504 zip codes are being urged to apply for assistance since it appears that there are a large number of unwanted unaltered animals from those areas.

However, all applications will be considered.

This program is funded by a grant from AnimalKind and begins immediately. Once the money has been depleted there is no guarantee that additional monies will be available.

For an application, please contact Amber Harmeyer, Humane Educator at 816-271-4877 or by email at aharmeyer@ci.st-joseph.mo.us.

If you would like to make a donation towards the program, please send it to AnimalKind, 701

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