



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

John Gage
National President

J. David Cox, Sr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

Augusta Y. Thomas
National Vice President for
Women and Fair Practices

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April 26, 2012

Governor Mitt Romney
Romney for President, Inc.
80 Hayden Ave.
Lexington, MA 02421

Governor Romney:

AFGE members are outraged by your recent comments disparaging government workers. You know what's really unfair? The specter of having a new boss who thinks so little about the work that you do that he can't bother getting his facts straight before making the ridiculous and patently false claim that federal workers are "getting better pay and benefits than the taxpayers they serve."

As the head of the largest federal employee union, representing more than 650,000 federal workers who live in rural towns and cities all across America, let me set a few things straight for you. More than half of these decent, hardworking, middle-class Americans earn less than \$70,000 a year, and one-fourth earn less than \$50,000. Decades of research by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics has consistently proven that federal employees earn less than their private-sector counterparts.

Tell me this: Do you think the meat and poultry inspector who earns less than \$32,000 a year while protecting Americans from E. Coli and other deadly diseases is making too much? How about the correctional officer who earns less than \$39,000 a year while guarding ruthless gang leaders in understaffed federal penitentiaries? And do you really think that the VA nursing assistant who earns just over \$27,000 a year providing care to veterans who have come home with serious psychological trauma is living the high life?

Unlike the millionaires and billionaires you seem most interested in serving, federal employees don't have a golden parachute waiting for them when they retire. The vast majority of a federal employee's retirement income comes from personal investments in the government's 401(k) plan and mandatory payments into Social Security. Yes, they also receive a modest pension when they retire. But I can think of nothing more unfair than a company failing to provide their employees with even a tiny nest egg to supplement an employee's own savings and meager Social Security income.



In response to the nation's financial troubles, federal employees have had their pay frozen for two consecutive years, and new federal workers will pay four times more for their pensions. Like other Americans, federal workers have suffered from rising health care costs. Their housing values and financial assets have gone down. And they face all of the same challenges as other middle-class families in these difficult economic times, which are the result of the "trickle-down" economics that President Bush put in place and that you wish to perpetuate. Federal employees have worked diligently to serve the American people during these difficult times, despite the persistent prospect of government shutdowns and the loss of their jobs due to agency budget cuts.

Federal workers are in the same boat as all middle-class Americans. Scapegoating them while corporate executives benefit from record profits and outrageous tax loopholes is unconscionable.

So yes, Governor Romney, we do need to "stop the unfairness" - the unfairness of politicians spreading false claims as facts and tarnishing the image of government workers to score political points.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Gage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

John Gage
National President
American Federation of Government Employees
80 F St. NW
Washington, DC 20001