

The American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO, the largest federal employee union, has been vigilant in urging Congress to provide the needed redress to the injustices in the Federal Wage System. My legislation, the Federal Wage Worker Pay Fairness Act of 2001, does so and is supported by AFGE.

First, the bill would guarantee wage grade workers an annual pay raise.

Unlike their white-collar co-workers, wage grade employees are not guaranteed any annual pay raise. The nationwide General Schedule (GS) and locality pay raise we in Congress approve every year are not given to federal employees in blue-collar occupations.

It is unfair for the federal government to single out one segment of its workforce for impoverishment. A basic across the board pay adjustment each year is necessary to offset increases in their federal health care premiums as well as general increases in the cost of living. No employee of the U.S. government should see steady decreases in purchasing power from persistent wage stagnation.

Wage grade workers have seen their paychecks purchase less and less. For example, from 1984 to 1999, the pay of a General Schedule-11, step 4, employee at Warner Robins Air Force Base, in Georgia, kept pace with inflation. The pay of a Wage Grade-10, step 2, employee fell by about half. In other words, the wage grade employee's wage increases only made up for half of the increase in prices measured by the Consumer Price Index. And this loss of purchasing power doesn't even reflect the skyrocketing costs of federal health care premiums, which rose by 30 percent in the past few years.

Providing all federal blue collar workers with a minimum annual wage adjustment equal to General Schedule increases is budget neutral because of the federal government's budget assumes that wage grade workers would be awarded the GS pay raise.

Second, the legislation would lift the caps on blue-collar pay increases.

On top of not being guaranteed an annual GS pay raise, any raise blue collar workers can receive is capped at the average nationwide GS pay raise. This is unfair and wrong. If federal agencies are to remain competitive we must stop imposing an artificial and arbitrary cap on blue-collar pay raises.

Third, my legislation would end the discriminatory practice of paying Department of Defense wage grade employees less than their counterparts in VA by restoring Monroney requirements to DoD.

The "Monroney amendment" to the Federal Wage Schedule requires the government to look outside the relevant wage survey area if there is an insufficient number of analogous private sector jobs to calculate blue-collar pay. This requirement is logically necessary to ensure that the prevailing wages are based on comparable work.

In 1985, the law was amended to exclude DoD from the Monroney amendment's requirement. As a result, in San Antonio, a Wage Grade-11, step 5 blue-collar worker in the VA or other federal departments earn \$18.26 an hour but his or her counterpart in DoD earns \$.69 less an hour, or \$17.57. On overtime, that 69 cent differential becomes \$1.04 an hour in lost pay. While 69 cents an hour or \$1.04 an hour more may not seem much, it adds up for individual employees who are trying to support their families.

Fourth, the legislation would simplify the data collection and administration of the Federal Wage Schedule.

The bill would consolidate the areas surveyed for wage rates from the current 133 localities in the Federal Wage Schedule to the 32 localities drawn by the federal salary council used to set the pay for virtually every other federal employee under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA). These 32 regions are a more modern and accurate reflection of contemporary labor markets and commuting patterns. Simplifying the areas of data collection used to calculate wage schedules from 32 localities rather than 133 would yield considerable savings.

The legislation would also transfer responsibility for data collection from the lead agency, the Department of Defense, to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This federal agency collects data used for other federal pay systems, most notably the GS white collar system. It already conducts data collection in the relevant localities, matching federal and non-federal jobs. While this change would impose new costs on the BLS, the consolidation of localities means that the cost of data collection to the government will go down overall.

Mr. Speaker, the single most important measure of a pay-setting system—for either white or blue-collar workers—is whether it allows workers to earn sufficient income to support a family in a decent fashion. Does it produce at least a stable standard of living? Does it hold out the hope that in good economic times, improvements in the standard of living are possible? Our current system does not.

The Federal Wage Worker Pay Fairness Act of 2001 would correct the fundamental errors in the current pay-setting system for federal blue-collar workers to ensure that they have a chance at a decent and stable standard of living. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation on behalf of our nation's federal workforce.

#### IN TRIBUTE TO JADE MANSFIELD

### HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 28, 2001*

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Jade Allison Mansfield, a woman who lived a rich and service-filled life before suddenly passing away at the age of forty-one. Uniformly described as a pillar of the community, Jade's drowning on February 19 is a very unfortunate loss to south Monterey County. Jade personified the best in civic spirit and was well-known throughout south Monterey County for the many diverse causes she undertook in order to better her community.

Jade, a lifelong resident of Monterey County, was born in Salinas on December 9, 1959. She served for four years in the United States Air Force as a crew chief and aircraft mechanic for the F4 fighting jet. While managing a successful bakery in Palo Alto, Jade earned a degree in Political Science from California State University San Francisco and a Doctor of Jurisprudence Law from Monterey College of Law.

Upon completion of her law degree, Jade embarked on an impressive career of commu-

nity service, volunteering her services to low-income senior citizens at a local non-profit legal services office. She eventually became Legal Service's for Seniors' full time attorney, assisting dozens of clients a year in her work to protect seniors against elder abuse and financial scams.

In addition to her work on behalf of the elderly, Jade ran a law practice assisting low-income clients in south Monterey County, providing much-needed legal assistance to those least able to obtain it. Prior to earning her law degree, she worked in the Monterey County government, helping those who needed aid.

Her generosity of spirit and her commitment to her community are further demonstrated by the active role she undertook in her neighborhood, and the answering support she showed towards her grandmother. Jade worked hard in her role as President of her rural homeowners association, and was tireless in ensuring that her neighbors had clean water and in providing other small services. She happily took on the responsibility of managing her grandmother's affairs when her grandmother was no longer able to care for herself; in this service she donated many hours each week to visiting and caring for her grandmother.

Jade deeply touched the lives of those around her; her intelligence, wit, and absolute joy in life were truly remarkable. Her commitment to assisting others was manifest in all aspects of her life. Jade's passing is a terrible loss throughout Monterey County, but especially to her friends and family, the legal community, the elderly, and the countless others who knew or were assisted by her. Her energy, tenacity, and kindness will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

#### INTRODUCTION OF "THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS ACT"

### HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 28, 2001*

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the International Competitiveness Act, along with my colleagues Congresswoman JENNIFER DUNN, Congressman ADAM SMITH, and Congressman RICHARD HASTINGS. This legislation would eliminate an irrational provision in our tax code that reduces the amount of foreign capital flowing into the United States, and redirects some of the capital that flows in away from U.S.-based mutual funds toward foreign-based mutual funds.

Under present law, most kinds of interest income and short-term capital gains received directly by a foreign investor or received through a foreign mutual fund are not subject to the 30 percent withholding tax on investment income. However, interest income and short-term capital gains earned by a U.S. mutual fund on its holdings are recharacterized as dividend income when distributed to a foreign investor and is therefore subject to the withholding tax.

Mutual funds are very popular tools for investors. Many foreign investors, like U.S. investors, prefer to rely on professional managers of mutual funds in choosing an appropriate portfolio, rather than having to do the research themselves. However, a foreign investor looking to invest in the U.S. currently