

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 6, 2011

John Berry  
Director  
United States Office of Personnel Management  
1900 E Street, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Director Berry:

We are writing to express our concern with your recent "Statement for the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee" (FPRAC) regarding the Federal Wage System (FWS) pay disparity and its impact on wage grade employees at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JB MDL). While we appreciate your desire to complete further analysis on the potential impact of the FPRAC changes, we remain concerned about the JB MDL employees who continue to be affected by this pay parity issue and urge you to complete this review process for our constituents in an expeditious manner.

As you are aware, the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission's recommendations consolidated McGuire Air Force Base, Ft. Dix, and Lakehurst Naval Air Station into Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

The Joint Base, now with the United States Air Force as the lead operating Service, is the first of its kind with all military service branches represented at one facility. Additionally, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst is home to Ft. Dix Federal Correctional Institution, as well as other non-DoD federal agencies. JB MDL employs over 40,000 men and women, and is one of the largest employers in New Jersey.

While joint basing at McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst has largely been a success, one area which remains a critical issue is wage parity for wage grade employees working at the Base. Before the three installations were combined, employees at McGuire and Ft. Dix were paid at the Philadelphia wage rate, while Lakehurst employees were paid at the New York City rate. After consolidation, this discrepancy remained, resulting in employees doing the same job on different ends of the Joint Base being paid different wages. While OPM has corrected this discrepancy for those employees under the General Schedule pay scale, there continues to be a pay disparity for employees under the Federal Wage System. It has been estimated that approximately 600 federal employees may still be affected by this issue.

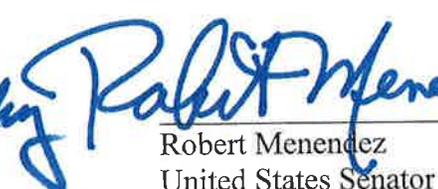
In 2010, the FPRAC recognized this problem and recommended that no (non-RUS) General Schedule locality pay area would be subdivided between more than one FWS area. However, since this recommendation was made, OPM has failed to implement the recommendation. Specifically, your recent Statement for FPRAC states that OPM is "to undertake a complete analysis of the impact of the recommended change," adding that "It is

anticipated that any changes would not begin to be implemented until calendar year 2013," after the Administration's pay freeze expires. Based on your Statement, under OPM's timeline, federal employees at the Joint Base will have waited nearly three years before their wages are adjusted to reflect FPRAC's recommendation, and more importantly, nearly *a decade* since the three bases were combined.

While we appreciate your desire to make a well-deliberated decision on this issue, three years is a long delay for these hard-working men and women to live under this pay disparity. It is our hope that OPM will complete their review process and consider fully implementing the October 2010 FPRAC recommendation for Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst well before the timeline that your current Statement suggests. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. Your staff may contact Joe Heaton with Rep. Runyan at 202-225-4765, or Kerri Talbot with Senator Menendez at 202-224-4744 if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

  
Frank R. Lautenberg  
United States Senator

  
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

  
Jon Runyan  
Member of Congress

  
Robert Andrews  
Member of Congress

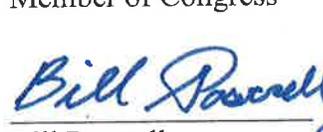
  
Frank LoBiondo  
Member of Congress

  
Christopher Smith  
Member of Congress

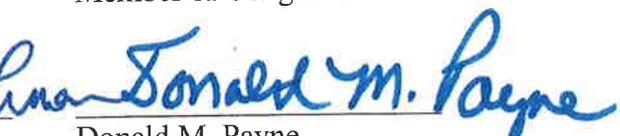
  
Scott Garrett  
Member of Congress

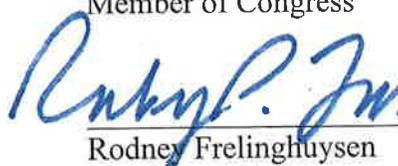
  
Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress

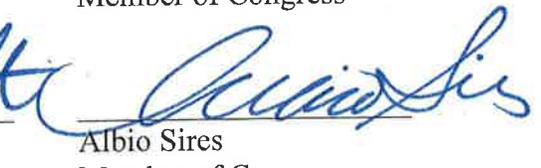
  
Bill Pascrell  
Member of Congress

  
Steven Rothman  
Member of Congress

  
Donald M. Payne  
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Rodney Frelinghuysen  
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Rush Holt  
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