

August 17, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chapter Presidents

RE: Response to Cato Institute—Sample Letters to the Editor

SUMMARY: The Cato Institute, a conservative DC-based organization, is advancing the position that federal workers are paid significantly more than private sector workers and have better benefits. The author of this flawed study is contending that federal benefits should be cut and employee pay frozen. NTEU is working to combat these outrageous statements through op-ed articles and letters to the editor.

To combat misinformation about federal employee pay and benefits, NTEU is also providing chapters with sample letters to the editor.

The author, Chris Edwards, maintains that the average compensation of federal workers in 2005 was \$106,579, twice the average compensation in the private sector of \$53,289. Mr. Edwards does not compare private sector compensation for similar occupations or take into account the changes in the federal workforce, such as the increase in highly specialized positions, as well as the increase in the proportion of managers to front-line employees.

Mr. Edwards also authored a recent article opposing the hiring of highly-skilled workers in the federal sector because they would be “more productive” in the private sector.

Editorials on his position have appeared in the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and articles have appeared in the *Orange County Register* and the *Fort Worth Telegram*. NTEU has submitted responses to all of those publications.

Should you wish to respond or should you encounter similar articles in your local paper, NTEU is providing chapters with sample letters to the editor which can be used to respond to these outrageous claims.

These letters are intended to be used as a response to a specific article on the issue and should not be sent to papers that have not published stories about the issue. To send the letters, fill in the missing information including the headline of the article and the date it appeared. Read the letter carefully to ensure the letter responds to points made in the article. Be sure to include your name and contact phone number. Newspapers will accept letters to the editor via e-mail. You can use the media guide provided on CapWiz on www.nteu.org to locate the appropriate e-mail address to send a letter to your local paper.

Please contact the Public Relations Department NTEU-PR@nteu.org to alert them to articles you see on this issue and for any assistance you need in responding.

Colleen M. Kelley
National President

Attachments