



*(October 21, 2015)*

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

**Alma L. Lee**  
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing:** [FederalDAILY e-Newsletter](#)

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- **AFGE calls for 'clean' vote on debt ceiling**

The largest federal employee union called on Congress to conduct a no-strings-attached vote to raise the debt ceiling to head off a government default early next month.

- **DOJ employee charged with intent to engage in sex with minor**

A federal grand jury has indicted a Justice Department employee from Columbia, Md., for interstate travel with intent to engage in a sexual act with a minor. DOJ announced Oct. 16.

- **More allegations of manager misbehavior at VA**

Information gathered by a union-reportedly at the request of Veterans Affairs Secretary Bob McDonald-paints a disturbing picture of the behavior of some managers at the department's Central Office.

## FEND Highlights

- **Many factors complicate arguments over public, private-sector pay**

A new paper from a think tank in Washington has stirred up an old question about federal pay: Are federal employees overpaid?

- **No COLA for 2016**

Social Security beneficiaries and retirees, federal retirees and disabled veterans will not get a cost-of-living adjustment in 2016, the federal government announced.



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## Forum Answers

- **Get answers to your federal retirement and finance questions in the Federal Benefits forum**

Moderated by our expert in federal financial and retirement planning, the Federal Benefits forum provides you with answers to important questions regarding your financial well-being. Here is a sample question from this past week. View the answer (and post your own questions) in the Federal Benefits Q&A forum at [www.FederalSoup.com](http://www.FederalSoup.com). It's FREE!

- "I plan to retire full immediate retirement when I reach 60 years old and will have 20 years and 11 months of civil service at a VA hospital. I plan to make an appointment with our human resources department in December. On February 10th, I will be 60. As best I can tell the earliest date for retirement would be

I'm worried they will make a mistake. My questions are: (1) Is February 19th the earliest date I can fully retire? (2) Do they have you sign papers of intent and should I sign these on a date before the retirement date?"

See the expert answer to this question by reading

<https://forum.federalsoup.com/default.aspx?g=posts&t=70101#post774495>.

## Featured Blog

- **Federal Coach: The federal employee of the year**

Dr. Steven Rosenberg is the chief of surgery at the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, where he developed life-saving treatments for cancer patients, pioneering the use of the body's immune system and genetically engineered anti-tumor cells to fight the disease. In an interview with Tom Fox, Rosenberg, who is the 2015 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal Federal Employee of the Year, spoke about seeking to help patients face great adversity, and how he motivates his staff and stays focused on the goal of saving lives.