



(February 17, 2016)

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: AFGE backs Connolly's anticipated pay raise bill**

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AFGE president J. David Cox, speaking at a Feb. 9 rally on Capitol Hill, has been advocating for a 5.3 percent pay raise for federal employees in 2017.

J. David Cox has had one number on his mind this week: 5.3 percent.

It's the pay raise that the American Federation of Government Employees president has been advocating for federal workers receive for 2017, instead of the 1.6 percent bump suggested in the president's budget.

[FEDERAL TIMES](#)

[5 takeaways from the AFGE's legislative conference](#)

The union said in a Feb. 12 release that Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., would tack the 5.3 percent raise into the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates Act, a bill the congressman's office said he plans to introduce next week.

Cox said, in a statement, AFGE backed the pending legislation and federal employees deserved the raise to make up for tepid wage growth over the past six years.

"It's time to raise wages for all working families in this country, and the federal government should serve as the model for all other employers to follow," he said.

Connolly introduced [a previous version of the FAIR Act](#) that included a 3.8 percent raise for federal employees in January 2015.

Cox, who spoke with Federal Times about the need for the 5.3 percent raise this week, said the legislation would help federal employees recover some of the wage growth that had been lacking since The Great Recession and sequestration took hold of the budget.

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What does the government need to encourage new talent? More money for one.

"As a result of six years of low to no pay raises, the purchasing power of federal paychecks has declined substantially," he said. "The women and men who keep this country running deserve a standard of living that keeps up with inflation and rising wages, which is why this catch-up contribution is long overdue. Congress must pass this legislation."