



Federal Bar Association

August 4, 2017

The Honorable Trey Gowdy
Chairman
Committee on Oversight
and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight
and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: FY 2018 Budget Instructions

Dear Chairman Gowdy and Ranking Member Cummings:

As you and your HOCR colleagues consider the FY 2018 budget instructions received from the House Budget Committee, we urge you to reject any budget cuts aimed at the compensation of current and former employees of the federal government.

The Federal Bar Association is the foremost professional association of lawyers in the private bar and federal service who practice and serve the law in the federal courts and the Executive Branch. Our membership includes over 3,000 federal attorneys responsible for an impressive range of litigation and advisory legal services in departments and agencies across the federal government. They assure the defense of our borders, the protection of our war fighters, the health of our economy, the safety of our food and water and the preservation of public safety. In short, these federal litigators and attorney advisors perform essential services necessary to assuring that our nation operates within the bounds of the law, that the interests of the United States are defended, and that justice is preserved for every American.

In pragmatic terms, the retention of key legal talent throughout the federal government is critical to assuring that taxpayer dollars are never wasted and always spent prudently. The retention of key legal talent helps to assure that our government upholds its laws and that the liberties of all Americans are protected. Reductions in the retirement benefits of federal employees, including federal attorneys, are a slippery slope that can compromise the government's capacity to attract and retain the expert legal talent it desperately needs. We urge the Committee to find other ways that do not reduce or erode the current pay and benefit structure of the federal workforce in its satisfaction of the FY 2018 budget instructions.

As you know, the federal workforce since 2010 has contributed \$182 billion towards deficit reduction through a three-year pay freeze, reduced pay increases, unpaid furlough days due to sequestration, and two increases in retirement contributions for new hires. These are substantial contributions. Federal employees and retirees should not be asked to sacrifice more. The federal government should not break its promise to upstanding federal employees and retirees who have based their career and retirement plans on long-standing promised benefit arrangements.

We are mindful of the deficit situation and the need for Congress to prevent federal spending from spiraling out of control. At the same time, we urge you to keep federal employees and retirees out of the crosshairs of further spending reductions. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely yours,



Stacy King
Executive Director



W. West Allen
Chair, Government Relations Committee

cc: Members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee