

January 2, 2017

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the two million dedicated federal and postal employees represented by the 30 organizations comprising the Federal-Postal Coalition, I write in support of an effort by your colleagues, Congressmen Tom Cole of Oklahoma and Rob Bishop of Utah, to strike the Holman Rule amendment from the House Rules package for the 115th Congress.

Under the Holman Rule, an amendment could be offered during floor debate of an appropriations bill to do any of the following: reduce the number of employees at a federal agency; reduce the salaries of those employees, or even one particular employee; or, eliminate one particular federal position.

More than 30 years ago, the House wisely repealed the Holman Rule because it was bad policy, created animosity among Members and failed to achieve its intended results. The House of Representatives would make a serious mistake by restoring this rule. While the Holman Rule is being described as a way to make it easier to give individual Members an opportunity to suggest ways to save money in the appropriations process, doing so from the House floor could wreak havoc on the process.

Reinstatement of this rule could also have major consequences for the federal workforce. Decisions that affect the workforce should be made through the authorizing process following hearings, testimony and substantive debate on each federal agency and its needs – not after limited debate on the House floor. Time and time again, arbitrary cuts to the federal workforce and its salaries have cost the federal government more money than they saved. According to the Government Accountability Office, during the sequestration-related furloughs of 2013 at the Department of Defense, officials found it difficult to meet their missions and sustain their workloads, causing further delays in mission-critical work and increasing backlogs.

In addition, the Holman Rule is redundant and unnecessary since current House rules allow for amendments to reduce federal spending through regular order, and Congress has the power to change federal pay or eliminate jobs through the authorization process. Further, the Rules Committee can make any number of amendments in order when a specific appropriations bill is being considered by the House of Representatives. Without the Holman Rule, Congress retains multiple avenues for saving money in the budget.

I ask for your support of Congressmen Bishop and Cole's effort to strike the Holman Rule from the Rules package. Thank you for your consideration of our views. Should you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at 202-662-2801.

Sincerely,



Kori Blalock Keller
Chair
Federal-Postal Coalition