



November 16, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the Senate  
United States Senate  
S-212 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan and Senate President Biden:

On behalf of nearly 5 million federal and postal employees and annuitants represented by the member organizations of the Federal-Postal Coalition, we write to urge your chambers to take up and pass the [recently submitted](#) Office of Personnel Management (OPM) legislative proposal to improve, expand, and harmonize death gratuities and other related allowances for the survivors of Federal civilian employees killed in the line of duty.

Every day, many of our members working for the federal government on behalf of the American people put their health and very lives on the line in pursuit of their agency's missions serving the public. Since 1992, tragically, over 3,000 federal employees have been killed in the line of duty, including in terrorist and criminal acts and during natural disasters. Congress recognized this fact with the passage of the Civilian Service Recognition Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-73) allowing federal agencies to present American flags to federal employees who die in the line of duty.

Now it is incumbent upon the Congress to build upon the Civilian Service Recognition Act and act on OPM's proposed legislation to increase the civilian death gratuity. The death gratuity of \$10,000 has not been increased since 1997, and the current authorized funeral allowance remains at \$800, unchanged since President Johnson was in office in 1966.

OPM has taken great care in the construction of this proposal, including a study of Federal Civilian Death and Burial Allowances, which examined agency authorities and practices covering civilian employees killed in the line of duty. The report issued following the study identified numerous variations and inequities among the patchwork of agency death-gratuity, funeral reimbursement travel and escort allowances.

Based on historical figures of about 25 employees per year being eligible for these benefits, any costs associated with implementation of this proposal would be negligible and can be absorbed. Further, the proposal includes a mechanism to request funding in a mass casualty situation.

The undersigned members of the Federal-Postal Coalition urge the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress to approve this proposal and send it to the President for his signature so that these benefits are more inclusive and equitable for the federal workforce across the board. Patriots who put their lives on the line for our nation and the American people deserve no less.



Thank you for your consideration of our perspective on this matter. Questions can be directed to our Coalition Chairman, Alan Lopatin at [Alan@ledgecounsel.com](mailto:Alan@ledgecounsel.com) or by phone at 202-487-4800.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)  
American Postal Workers' Union (APWU)  
FAA Managers Association (FAAMA)  
Federal Managers Association (FMA)  
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers (IFPTE)  
Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA)  
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)  
National Air Traffic Controller Association (NATCA)  
National Association of Assistant U.S. Attorneys (NAAUSA)  
National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV)  
National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)  
National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC)  
National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS)  
National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA)  
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)  
National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)  
National Rural Letter Carriers' Association (NRLCA)  
National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU)  
National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO)  
Organization of Professional Employees of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (OPEDA)  
Patent Office Professional Association (POPA)  
Professional Managers Association (PMA)  
Senior Executives Association (SEA)  
United Postmasters and Managers of America (UMPA)

CC: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader  
The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Minority Leader  
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, House Majority Leader  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader  
The Honorable Jason Chaffetz, Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
The Honorable Elijah Cummings, Ranking Member, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
The Honorable Ron Johnson, Chairman, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
The Honorable Tom Carper, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs