

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

Kathleen McGettigan
Acting Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415

March 5, 2018

Dear Director McGettigan,

We write to urge you to address a significant disparity between the Federal Wage System Area and General Schedule (GS) locality pay area in our states that adversely impacts our federal wage-grade constituents in southern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Specifically, the Boston-Worcester-Providence GS locality area currently provides for a 27.48% locality pay adjustment for federal GS employees living in Bristol, Worcester, and Norfolk counties in Massachusetts and Bristol, Providence, Kent, Newport, and Washington counties in Rhode Island. However, these counties fall under the Narragansett Bay wage schedule, either in full or in part. As a result, wage-grade employees living in the same locations receive substantially less compensation to adjust for cost-of-living expenses when compared to their GS counterparts.


We are aware that the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee (FPRAC) voted in 2010 to recommend that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) align Federal Wage System Areas with General Schedule locality pay areas nationwide. That same year, the FPRAC voted to table a recommendation to better align the Boston GS locality area and the Narragansett wage grade area without prejudice, anticipating that OPM would instead enact a nationwide policy to better align these geographic boundaries. However, OPM has yet to enact this recommendation.

This issue is particularly critical to Rhode Island and Massachusetts given our states' small sizes and the unique commuting pattern in the Boston and Providence metropolitan areas. Rationalizing locality and wage areas would reduce the inequities among federal employees in our region, bring parity to federal employees in our states, and enable federal facilities in the impacted counties to attract and retain the best qualified employees.

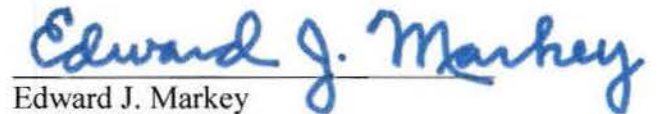
We respectfully request that you approve the 2010 FPRAC consolidation proposal and finalize any regulations required in order to implement it as soon as practicable, or provide us with a written explanation for why you have chosen not to do so. We are also aware that the FPRAC Chair position is currently vacant, and as a result the FPRAC has not met in over 14 months. Therefore, we ask that you appoint an FPRAC Chair as required by 5 U.S.C. § 5347 in order to facilitate the important work of the Committee.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to receiving a timely response.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator