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## **FEW Washington Legislative Update July 1-15, 2024**

*The House and Senate are in recess until the week of July 8*

### **FEW Washington Legislative Update – July 1-15, 2024**

#### **Tier I**

##### **Women in the Military Healthcare**

On Thursday, July 11, 2024, [S.4717](#) – A bill to include pregnancy and loss of pregnancy as qualifying life events under the TRICARE program and to require a study on maternal health in the military health system, and for other purposes – was introduced in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

### **FEW Washington Legislative Update – July 1-15, 2024**

#### **Tier II**

##### **Federal Workforce:**

##### **Comprehensive Paid Leave for Federal Employees Act ([H.R. 856/S. 274](#))**

On July 8, 2024, and July 10, 2024, Rep. Summer Lee (PA-12) and Rep. Julia Brownley (CA-26) respectively became new co-sponsors for the Comprehensive Paid Leave for Federal Employees Act ([H.R. 856/S. 274](#)). There are now 53 co-sponsors in the House, 12 co-sponsors in the Senate.

*Converts unpaid caregiving and medical FMLA leave to paid leave for federal employees (parental is currently paid).*

##### **Proposals on Schedule F, Telework Set for Senate Consideration**

A proposal to put into law a ban against a future excepted service Schedule F has been proposed as an amendment to the annual defense authorization bill now ready for a full Senate vote, in what may be the last good chance for enactment of such a ban in this Congress.

The amendment would limit the excepted service to the current categories, in effect barring a repeat of a future executive order similar to the one issued—but not carried out—late in the Trump administration. That would have shifted 50,000 or more competitive service federal employees involved with making or carrying out policy into that new category, where they would lose most career protections and in which positions could be filled without competition.

A similar amendment has been offered to the House version of the general government appropriations bill up for floor voting as soon as next week. However, while that proposal appears to have some Republican support in the House, it first would have to be made into an order by the House Rules Committee, controlled by conservative Republicans.

The proposed amendments would go a step beyond rules recently finalized by Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to do the same, which could in turn be overridden by administrative action in a future administration.

Also being offered to the DoD authorization—one of the few “must-pass” annual bills—is an amendment to limit offsite work by federal employees to no more than four days in any biweekly period. Agencies could limit telework still further—apparently without regard to any union contract provisions—by citing factors such as “the frequency with which the employee needs to access classified information;” they could allow more in circumstances including where employees travel frequently or have “highly specialized expertise.”

Agencies further would have to report on how they measure the impact of telework on productivity as well as on any negative impact it has.

That bipartisan amendment is the latest of a series of proposals pending in Congress to either limit telework—including one in a House-passed appropriations bill banning it outright at DoD—or to at least require fuller reporting on it, with an eye to cutting it back and/or compelling agencies to give up under-used workspace. Source: [\(Fedweek\)](#)

## **Federal Pay**

The DoD authorization bill now ready for a Senate vote addresses several federal employment-related issues, including ordering a review of locality pay rates.

The Senate Armed Services Committee earlier had released only a summary of the bill which showed that the bill assumes a 2 percent federal employee raise in January; would raise the maximum buyout payment at DoD from \$25,000 to \$40,000; and would make permanent a special hiring authority for spouses of military personnel.

More detailed report language issued to prepare the bill for floor voting shows that the measure also would require DoD to report to the committee on whether locality pay rates for its civilian employees—as well as housing rates for military personnel—“may negatively impact readiness, recruitment, and retention of uniformed and civilian employees in highly specialized, technical, and scientific fields.”

It expressed special concern about “installations located in certain real estate markets with higher shares of single-family housing and seasonal population swings that drive higher housing costs.”

Civilian and military personnel in such high-cost areas “face significant cost-of-living challenges due to unique local housing market dynamics that affect the cost of housing. These factors include significant seasonal population changes and the high prevalence of second homes,” it says.

Locality pay rates at DoD are the same as at other agencies; a review there would carry implications for the locality pay program in general.

The bill further would freeze employment at the department in positions related to Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and prevent filling any vacancies in related positions—stopping short of language in several House bills to end such initiatives government-wide. It further would continue several special pay authorities for civilians assigned to areas of military operations or in certain occupations and would continue or expand flexible hiring rules in certain subagencies and occupations.

Source: [\(Fedweek\)](#)

**FEW Washington Legislative Update – July 1-15, 2024**  
**Tier III**

**Women as a Class:**

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

On Thursday, July 11, 2024, [H.R.9004](#) – To amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the Women-Owned Small Business program in the Department of Veterans Affairs procurement hierarchy of small business preferences, and for other purposes – was introduced in the House and referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**Gender Pay Gap**

On Tuesday, July 9, 2024, [H.Con.Res.118](#) – Recognizing the significance of equal pay and the disparity in wages paid to men and to Black women – was introduced in the House and referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

**Paid Leave for All**

On Thursday, July 11, 2024, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) joined [Paid Leave for All](#), [Glamour](#), colleagues and advocates for a Day of Action to mark the significant milestones in the ongoing fight for a national paid family and medical leave policy. Paid Leave for All and Glamour [announced growing support for their demands](#) that policymakers finally commit to passing paid leave and give all working people the right to care for themselves and their families without losing a paycheck, along with releasing other new research findings and major new initiatives.

**Women's Health**

On Thursday, July 11, 2024, [S.4554](#) – the Reproductive Freedom for Women Act – a motion to proceed to measure was considered in the Senate after a cloture on the motion was not invoked in the Senate on Wednesday, July 10, 2024.

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