# [Should Federal Employees’ Bonuses and Pensions be Provided to the Public?](https://www.fedsmith.com/2019/05/14/should-federal-employees-bonuses-pensions-provided-public/)

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Recently introduced legislation would make the amounts of federal employees’ bonuses and pensions made available to the public.

The Federal Employee Disclosure (FED) Transparency Act ([H.R. 2612](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr2612)) was introduced by Congressman Jody Hice (R-GA). It would make all federal employee bonuses publicly available and require the disclosure of federal pension records under the Freedom of Information Act to include the monthly annuity amount and total employee annuity contribution.

The bill would also require government agencies to report any performance-based bonuses over $10,000 to Congress and provide an explanation as to why the bonus was awarded.

“Transparency is an important tool in fostering accountability,” said Hice. “Inside the beltway, it’s easy to forget that the ultimate boss of federal employees is the American people – and the people have a right to know the bonuses and pension perks of the staffers whose salaries they’re paying. Through the FED Transparency Act, federal agencies will no longer be allowed to operate without sufficient scrutiny or oversight of payroll practices, making spending data more reliable and accessible. Simply put, a more informed and empowered people results in a better government for all.”

Similar legislation was [previously introduced](https://www.fedsmith.com/2018/03/20/legislation-make-federal-employee-bonuses-public-information/) in the last session of Congress by Congressman Mark Sanford (R-SC), but it failed to advance.

Federal employees’ annual salaries are considered public information and have been [made available publicly dating back to the 1800s](https://www.fedsmith.com/2013/05/07/releasing-names-and-federal-employee-salaries-since-1816/). However, the federal government has been increasingly withholding more and more of these salary data which got the attention of Congressman Trey Gowdy (R-SC) last year. He [pressed the Office of Personnel Management for details](https://www.fedsmith.com/2018/03/11/lawmakers-want-know-opm-suddenly-withholding-federal-employee-salary-data/) as to why the agency appeared to be suddenly withholding data it had released for years, but OPM denied that it was doing anything differently.

It’s unlikely given the history of this legislation and the trend within agencies of increasingly withholding salary data that this bill would ever pass into law, but it raises an interesting overall debate – should federal employees’ pension and salary information be available to the public?