



Eric Bunn Sr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

Dr. Everett B. Kelley
National President

Jeremy A. Lannan
NVP for Women & Fair Practices

January 30, 2023

Sethuraman Panchanathan, Director
2415 Eisenhower Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22314
National Science Foundation
Washington DC

Dear Dr. Panchanathan:

On behalf of the more than 750,000 federal and District of Columbia workers represented by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), including 1,030 at the National Science Foundation, I write with regard to your failure to provide a decent pay adjustment to the NSF program directors for 2023. While President Biden provided an average 4.6% salary increase to General Schedule and Federal Wage System employees, you chose a different path and provided these hardworking and highly trained scientists with just 0.5% nationwide and 0.5% to vary by locality.

It is stunning that in an era when the federal government is struggling to recruit and retain employees with advanced degrees in STEM fields, you have taken it upon yourself to insult and impoverish the scientists who lead scientific programs mandated by the U.S. Congress. Our members have learned that this was no mere oversight on your part. Instead, it was a deliberate attempt to create division between the Senior Executive Service managers and the NSF scientists who carry out the agency's core mission.

Your denial of anything above the paltry aggregate 1.0% pay adjustments to AD-4 staff could not come at a worse time. The NSF promised Congress that if it received support for new lines of research, the agency would deliver results. Indeed, you made these commitments to Congress on the assumption that the AD-4 staff would fulfill your promises. Instead of supporting the extraordinary scientists with at least the same pay adjustment President Biden ordered for General Schedule employees, you decided to all but freeze their pay.

I understand from the members of AFGE Local 3403 that this profoundly unjust action with regard to the pay of AD-4 staff is not the first or only instance of disrespect and disregard you have shown your staff. Whether it was re-entry after the most dangerous period of the pandemic, accommodating NSF staff's desire for hybrid work arrangements, or fair distribution of pay raises. You show utter disregard and disrespect for NSF staff.

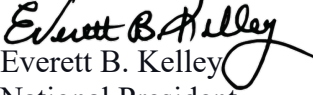
Lawmakers often support the notion of greater discretion in awarding pay adjustments to federal employees, arguing that hard to fill positions in STEM fields requires the ability to provide more generous salaries and salary increases than those provided to non-STEM employees. Your abuse of this discretion gives lie to the notion that agency heads and supervisors would use discretion



to enhance mission performance. Instead, you have demonstrated a blatant lack of concern for the welfare of your workforce, the ability of NSF to recruit and retain scientists, or the good of your agency.

It is not too late to switch course and do the right thing, and the right thing, as you must know, is to grant all AD-4 staff at the NSF the full 4.6% salary adjustment for 2023 as that granted to General Schedule employees.

Sincerely,


Everett B. Kelley
National President