Dear Editor

President Obama’s proposal to freeze federal pay for two years barely reduces a deficit that has exceeded $1 trillion for the past two years. It doesn’t create a single job or make government more effective. It’s simply a political stunt that continues the misguided practice of scapegoating federal and other public employees. And it’s a stunt that’s built on faulty assumptions.

The average federal employee is far from overpaid. Federal employees are paid, on average, 24% behind their private counterpart. In fact, over a million federal employees (out of a total of 1.8 million) earn less than $70,000 annually. The starting salary for a VA nursing assistant is $27,322. For a correctional officer the starting salary is $38,619, while a Border Patrol agent starts out at $34,067. Finally, salaries for DoD civilian police officers, like the courageous two who brought down the shooter a little over a year ago at Fort Hood, start at $34,907. Yet President Obama has succumbed to the political pressure from Republicans to cut federal wages at the same time that millionaires on Wall Street get bailouts, huge bonuses, and their tax cuts, too.

No one is served by our government participating in a “race to the bottom” in wages. A two-year pay freeze for federal workers is bad for the all working families, bad for business and bad for our local economy. We need to invest in creating jobs, not undermining the ones we have. It is time to get our nation back on track, but we should not do so by placing an even greater burden on workers and their families.