

## An Early Retirement or a Fast One?

Wouldn't it be great if Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) employees got cash bonuses, years of service credit and a minimum of 75% of their base salary! Perhaps, just suppose, CSRS employees would gain five years added tenure along with a fifty thousand dollar incentive bonus! Doesn't that sound great? If these proposals sound too good to be true, it is probably because they are! Rumor has it that Congress is in the midst of a major retirement proposal. In fact, these rumors have gained the attention of reliable news sources. These tantalizing "bills" have tickled the fancy of aspiring retirees for years. Nevertheless, like all dreams too good to be true, they will soon enter into the land of fairy tale and make believe.

The retirement hoax e-mails started in early 2001. Slowly, they made their way around Government offices, lunchrooms and activity facilities. Ultimately, these rumors were given a badge of legitimacy by various "news" centers. Allegedly, Rep. Bill Chavez and Lynn Faust proposed H.R. 28344, the early retirement bill. The fact is that currently, there are no Rep. Bill Chavez or Lynn Faust in Congress. A complete and total falsehood! In addition, the highest bill number is four digits, not five. Thus, H.R. 28344 could not be a legitimate bill in the House.

There was yet another e-mail that made its way through the corridors of Government facilities. Supposedly, the Senate version was the "long-awaited" 50-50 bill. That is, an aspiring retiree would receive five years added to tenure and age along with a fifty thousand dollar incentive bonus. This e-mail declares itself a "news" report and lists Sen. Bingaman and Rep. Abercrombie as its sponsors. Unlike the other "bill", these individuals are, in fact, elected officials. However, the Legislative Record shows that such a bill has never been proposed. In addition, calls were made from the CECOM Legal Office to both Senator Bingaman's and Rep. Abercrombie's Washington offices. Our suspicions were confirmed; neither official ever sponsored such a bill.

So what have we learned? First, be wary of e-mails! These things travel fast with little regard for the truth. Second, beware of official-sounding news reports. These news reports often find their information from those same reckless e-mails. Third, some healthy skepticism oftentimes reveals the truth. Don't let your desires blind you from the truth. Lastly, think long and hard before you hit the send button!

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