

CRS Report for Congress

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Brief Facts About Congressional Pensions

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Brief Facts About Congressional Pensions (as of October 1, 1999)

	Number of members ^a	Average annual pension ^b	Average years of creditable service ^c	Average age ^d	Average contributions ^e
Members retiring during FY1998					
Under CSRS ^f	4	\$31,272	16.0	60.0	\$45,178
Under FERS ^g	4	\$15,336	16.7	53.3	\$22,553
Members retiring during FY1999					
Under CSRS ^f	15	\$54,804	20.8	64.2	\$78,766
Under FERS ^g	9	\$44,208	19.5	68.5	\$29,576
All retired Members (as of 10/1/99)					
Under CSRS ^f	362	\$51,660	20.2	75.7	\$57,430
Under FERS ^g	52	\$46,572	21.3	68.7	\$39,400

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

^a Data include only former Members currently receiving congressional pensions.

^b For Members retiring in 1998, amount shown is 1998 pension. For all others, amount is 1999 pension.

^c Creditable service includes congressional, active duty military, and other federal civilian service.

^d For newly retired Members, average age at retirement; for all retired Members, average age on 10/1/99.

^e Total lifetime contributions the Member paid into the retirement system, including payments to both CSRS and FERS for Members who switched from CSRS to FERS.

^f CSRS is the Civil Service Retirement System. Congress enacted the CSRS for executive branch employees in 1920 and extended it to Members of Congress in 1946. The CSRS was closed to new participants as of January 1, 1984, when P.L. 98-21 required Social Security coverage for all Members of Congress and new federal workers first hired on or after that date.

^g FERS is the Federal Employees' Retirement system. Congress enacted the FERS to coordinate with Social Security coverage. Members who had been covered under the CSRS could elect to switch to the new FERS during "open seasons" held in 1987 and 1998, or could remain in the CSRS.