

WASHINGTON, DC – Federal employees whose jobs require them to speak another language but do not get compensated for it, could get a boost in their salary because of a new bill introduced today by Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA).

Currently, federal employees who speak more than one language often do get commensurate pay for their additional skills, even when this increases their workload. The bill, [One America, Many Voices](#), introduced today by Honda, Rep. Luis Fortuño (R-PR), and Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ) would increase pay by five percent if the language requirement is part of a federal employee's job description.

"It is only logical that employees should get compensated for the value-added they bring to their position," Honda said. "It improves customer service and raises the overall morale of employees when they feel their skills are valued. This is tried and proven practice in the private sector; it encourages efficiency. The public does not deserve any less."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 47 million people currently living in the country speak a language other than English. Increasingly, bilingual skills are absolutely necessary for many federal employees to serve the public and accomplish the mission of federal agencies.

Yet, there is no standard across federal agencies to compensate federal workers who make substantial use of their language skills and whose workload often increases as a result. Furthermore, the Federal workforce is aging, and in order to attract a diverse, talented new generation of workers to replace the retirees, fair compensation is necessary.

"I have no doubt that this legislation will establish a fair and equitable treatment for all federal employees that will improve the Federal government's ability to retain and recruit a talented and dynamic workforce," said Fortuño.

The bill will now go to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.