

Washington Post

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Senate Blocks Ford On Pay Raise Delay

Amount To Be Set 'Quickly'

By Stephen Green
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The Senate handed President Ford a resounding defeat yesterday in his first major legislative test, voting by a nearly 2-to-1 margin to grant an Oct. 1 pay raise for federal employees, instead of delaying the raises three months as the President had ordered.

Under the resolution approved by a vote of 64 to 35, some 3.5 million federal civilian and military employees will get a pay increase Oct. 1. No action from the House is required.

The pay decision affects 1.4 million white-collar federal workers plus 2.1 million military servicemen, whose salary changes by law are tied to federal civilian pay.

Affected in the Washington area are about 280,000 civil servants and about 70,000 servicemen.

Mr. Ford had asked that the

pay increase be delayed until Jan. 1 to help fight inflation.

The amount of the pay increase is still not certain, but must be set by the President before Oct. 1.

In mid-August, the President's agents on pay matters, the Civil Service Commission and the Office of Management and Budget, recommended a 5.5 per cent increase to keep federal salaries comparable to those in private business.

Mr. Ford also must consider the recommendation of an independent advisory committee on federal pay, which is scheduled to submit its report to him early next week.

After the vote, Mr. Ford issued a statement through the White House press office in which he said he was "disappointed in today's Senate vote." He added, however, that he is "in agreement with the Congress that federal employees deserve this pay increase."

"It was painful for me," Mr. Ford said, "to ask the Congress to defer this raise for three months. I know I had asked the Congress to do a difficult thing but there was a compelling reason. I refer to the inflationary momentum which I regard as domestic public enemy number one."

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up raise* Page C1.