

LEGISLATORS ARE OUR FRIENDS

Carley Dan

As has been chronicled in these pages before, the topic of merit pay in America is hotter than Jessica Simpson on spring break or Johnny Depp while hoisting up landlubbers – depending, of course, on your preferences. It's been the topic of debate in dozens of statehouses and on the platforms of countless politicians. It's been proposed for profoundly diverse employee groups from teachers to doctors. The interest grows with each passing day.

As the interest grows, so does the opposition. The usual suspects, teacher unions, and advocates for doctors, have largely come out against merit pay, characterizing it as unworkable, ineffective, and a significant waste of economic resources.

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Despite this opposition and the related national debate, the train appears to have already left the merit pay station. Since merit pay is on its way, one is forced to choose between getting on board or risk a dance with the train.

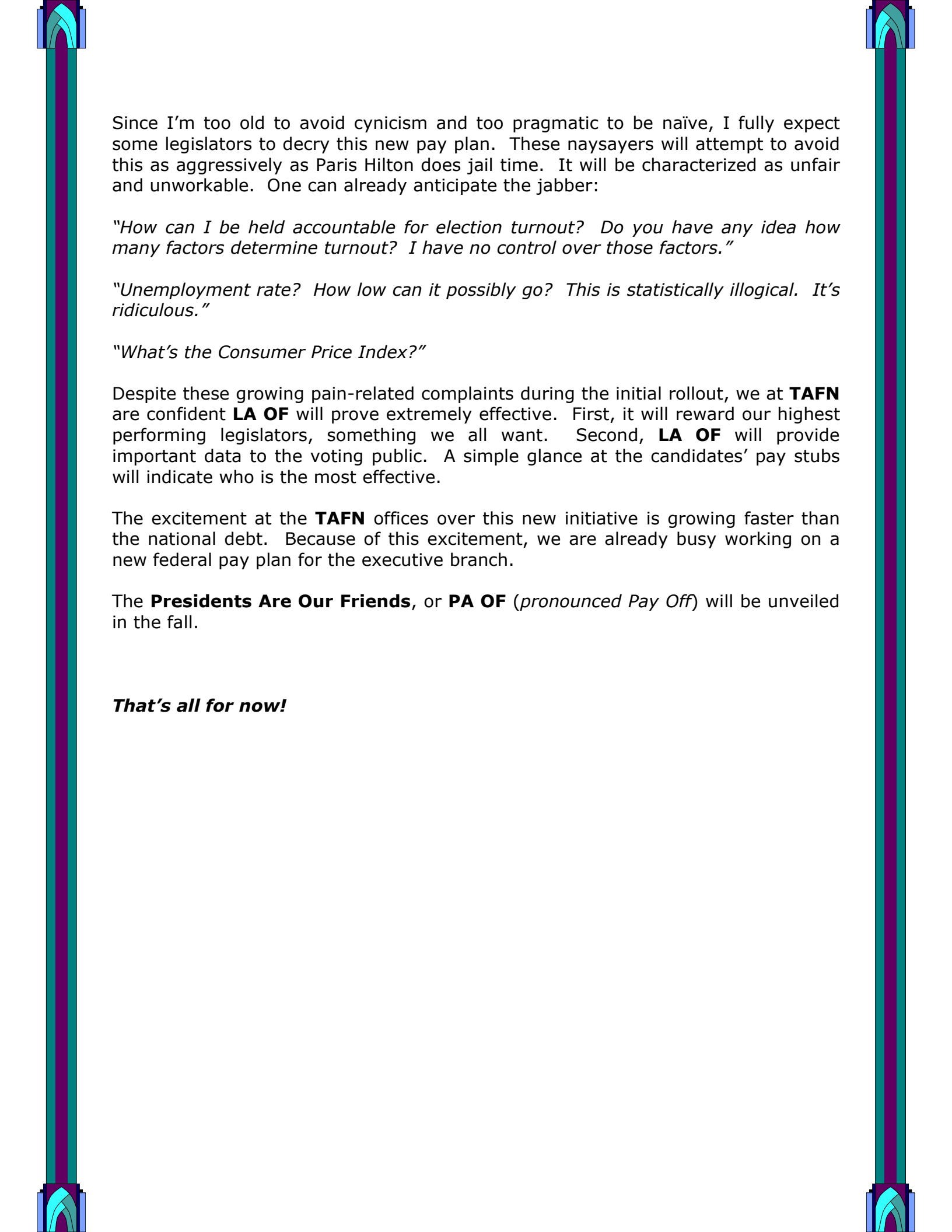
Being the consummate pragmatists, the staff at ***That's All For Now*** has decided to buy a ticket and climb into the club car. Merit pay daiquiris for everyone!

So excited are we about inclusion into the growing club of merit pay advocates, the **TAFN** staff has decided to weigh-in on the issue with proposals of its own. Since it's been argued that merit pay is a sound practice for teachers and doctors, it follows that it most certainly would be appropriate for other groups of employees.

In our search to find a group for which to advocate, we landed on one that is otherwise too busy working on the common good to find time for improving their own lot in life, our state legislators. In an effort to bring them the same merit pay benefits enjoyed by so many others, **TAFN** is now proposing the **Legislators Are Our Friends**, or **LA OF** (*pronounced Lay Off*) plan.

LA OF would provide our state legislators with an opportunity to earn extra cash by meeting or exceeding very relevant, specific, and reachable objectives. There are to be three specific targets tied to specific monetary bonuses.

1. In the years the legislator is running for re-election, he/she will be eligible to receive a \$5,000 bonus if voter turnout in the candidate's district increases by 5% or more over the previous election's turnout.
2. Each year, the legislator will be eligible for a \$7,000 bonus if the unemployment rate in his/her district decreases by 7%.
3. In each year the nation's consumer price index remains at or below a 3% increase, the legislator will receive a \$100 bonus.



Since I'm too old to avoid cynicism and too pragmatic to be naïve, I fully expect some legislators to decry this new pay plan. These naysayers will attempt to avoid this as aggressively as Paris Hilton does jail time. It will be characterized as unfair and unworkable. One can already anticipate the jabber:

"How can I be held accountable for election turnout? Do you have any idea how many factors determine turnout? I have no control over those factors."

"Unemployment rate? How low can it possibly go? This is statistically illogical. It's ridiculous."

"What's the Consumer Price Index?"

Despite these growing pain-related complaints during the initial rollout, we at **TAFN** are confident **LA OF** will prove extremely effective. First, it will reward our highest performing legislators, something we all want. Second, **LA OF** will provide important data to the voting public. A simple glance at the candidates' pay stubs will indicate who is the most effective.

The excitement at the **TAFN** offices over this new initiative is growing faster than the national debt. Because of this excitement, we are already busy working on a new federal pay plan for the executive branch.

The **Presidents Are Our Friends**, or **PA OF** (*pronounced Pay Off*) will be unveiled in the fall.

That's all for now!