

O-3 basic pay grew 22.8% faster than GS-15 gross salary.

The least-adjusted 2001–2026 actual result. O-3 cash compensation grew 29.6% faster on the same GS-15 gross-salary baseline.

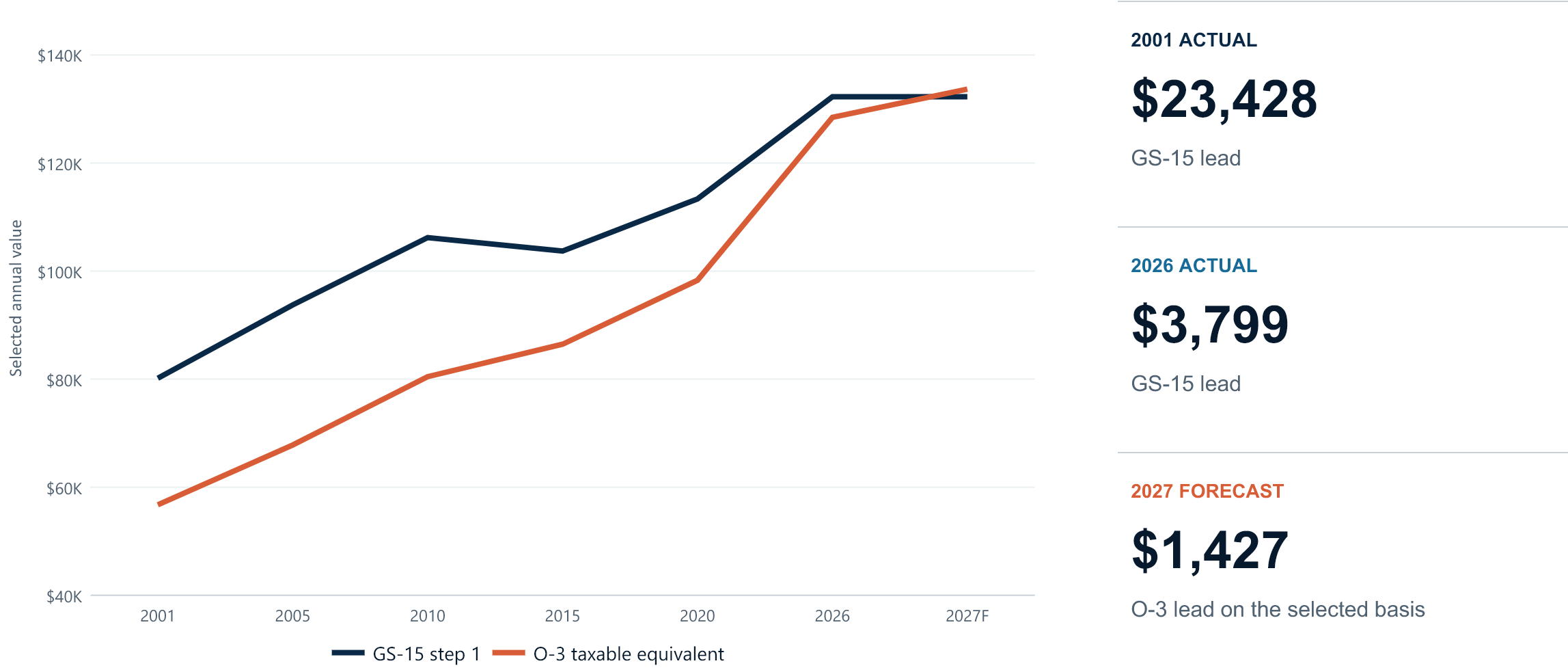
Lead basis: published Rest of U.S. GS-15 step 1 gross salary and O-3 over-six basic pay, 2001–2026 actual. The selected-basis 2027F crossover is shown later as a forecast sensitivity.

The actual trend comes before the forecast crossover

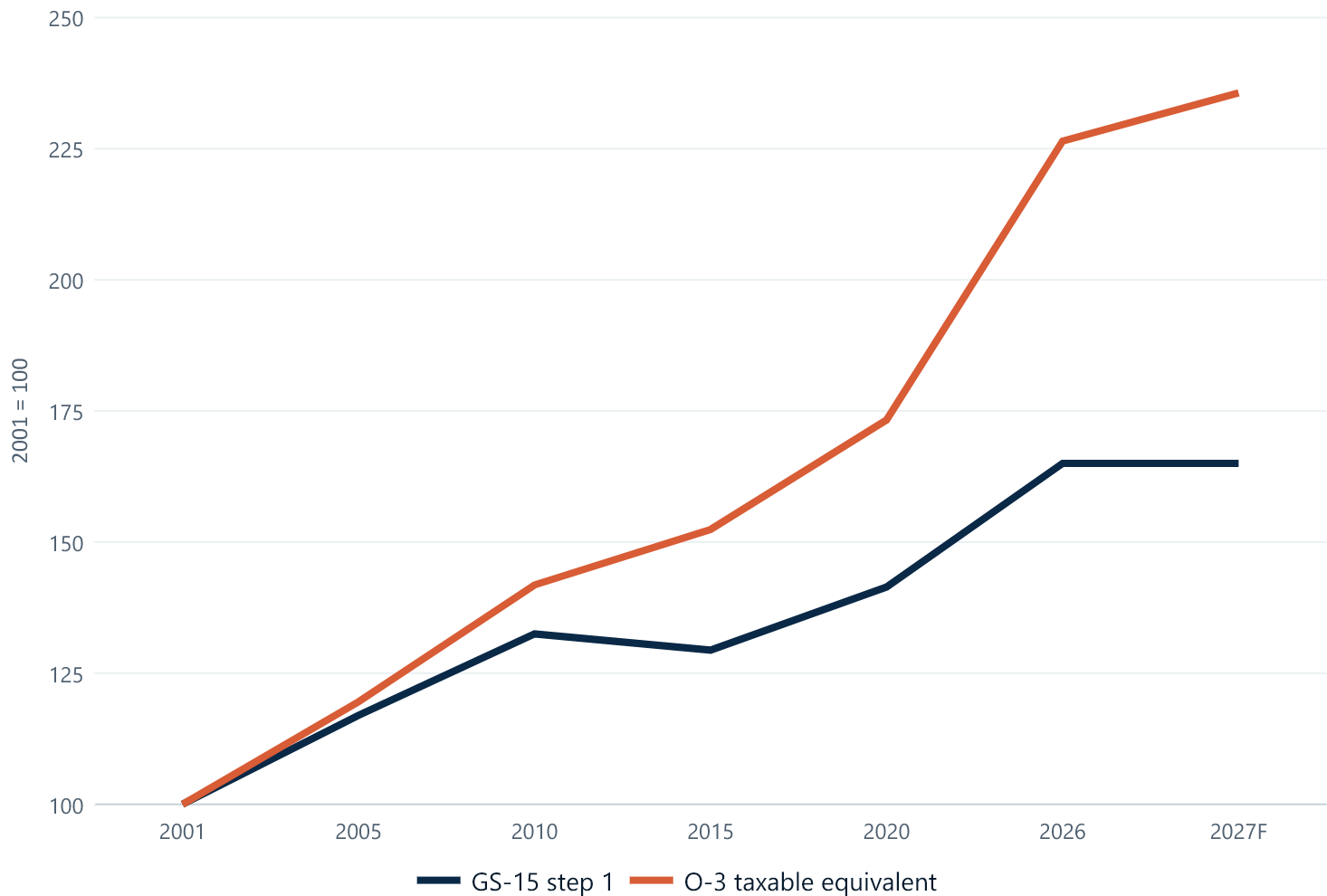


This is not a case against military compensation. It is a warning that the historical senior-civilian advantage has eroded under a transparent valuation basis.

Actual dollars narrow; the separate forecast crosses



O-3 growth has outpaced the selected GS-15 profile



The graph holds the 2001 relationship constant and asks how each selected profile grew from that starting point.

37.2%

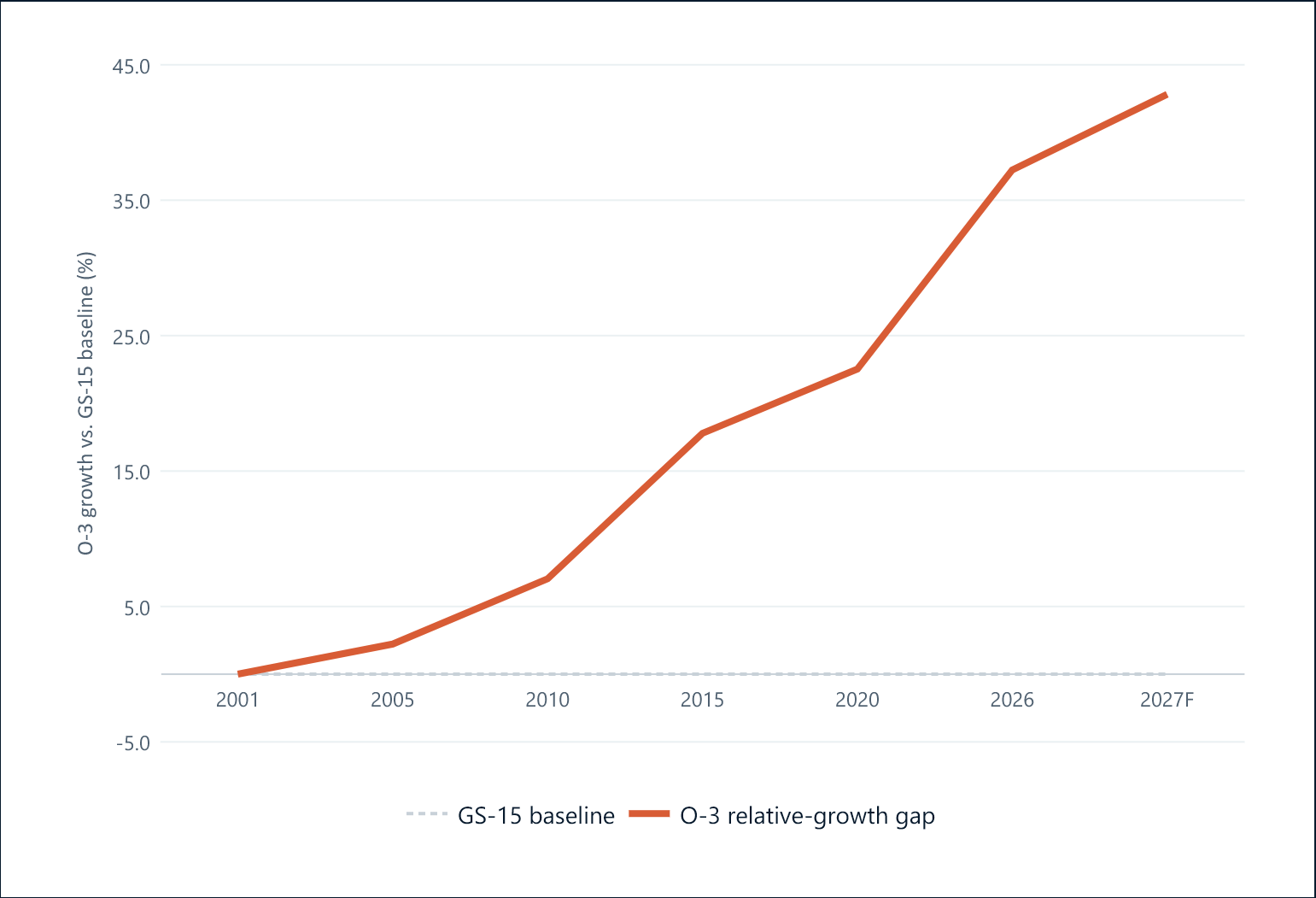
2026 actual growth gap

42.8%

2027 forecast growth gap

Indexed growth begins at 100 in 2001. The y-axis floor is 100. 2027F is a forecast.

The relative-growth gap reaches 42.8% in 2027F



This is not the dollar difference. It is the O-3 profile's cumulative growth relative to the selected GS-15 profile, measured from their 2001 relationship.

37.2%

2026 actual

42.8%

2027 forecast

The forecast dollar crossover occurs after the cumulative growth relationship has already diverged sharply.

The 2027 crossover can be rebuilt line by line

GS-15 STEP 1 - 2027 FORECAST

Published Rest of U.S. salary	\$147,945.00
- New-hire FERS (4.4%)	\$6,509.58
= Salary after FERS	\$141,435.42
- OASDI (6.2% x salary; cap \$190,200)	\$9,172.59

SELECTED GS-15 VALUE

\$132,262.83 -> \$132,263

O-3 OVER 6 - 2027 FORECAST

Basic pay	\$98,414.64
+ Hill AFB with-dependents BAH	\$28,332.00
+ Officer BAS	\$3,941.76
= Total compensation	\$130,688.40
+ Tax gross-up: (BAH + BAS) x 22% / 78%	\$9,102.86
- OASDI: 6.2% x basic pay only	\$6,101.71

TAXABLE-SALARY EQUIVALENT

\$133,689.55 -> \$133,690

Cash basis: \$130,688.40 - \$6,101.71 = \$124,586.69 -> \$124,587. That remains \$7,676 below GS-15.

Every headline number reconciles to source components

Component	2001 actual	2026 actual	2027 forecast
GS-15 gross salary	\$85,832.00	\$147,945.00	\$147,945.00
- New-hire FERS	\$686.66	\$6,509.58	\$6,509.58
- GS employee OASDI	\$4,984.80	\$9,172.59	\$9,172.59
GS-15 selected value	\$80,160.54	\$132,262.83	\$132,262.83
O-3 basic pay	\$43,876.80	\$92,844.00	\$98,414.64
+ Hill AFB BAH	\$10,224.00	\$28,332.00	\$28,332.00
+ Officer BAS	\$1,925.04	\$3,941.76	\$3,941.76
+ Federal tax gross-up	\$3,426.65	\$9,102.86	\$9,102.86
- O-3 employee OASDI	\$2,720.36	\$5,756.33	\$6,101.71
O-3 selected value	\$56,732.13	\$128,464.29	\$133,689.55
Relationship	GS-15 +\$23,428	GS-15 +\$3,799	O-3 +\$1,427

The 2001 GS OASDI calculation uses the \$80,400 annual wage cap. The 2027 GS salary remains below the \$190,200 forecast cap.

Turn the warning into a dated workforce decision

Commission a critical-skills workforce diagnostic and a targeted-compensation options assessment, each with a named owner and decision date.

\$140.9B

Sentinel estimated acquisition cost
after the 2024 review

81%

above the September 2020
Milestone B estimate

~1,000

civilian and military personnel in
Hill's ICBM Systems Directorate

Obtain authorized / filled / vacant positions; time-to-hire and offer outcomes; regrettable attrition and retirement eligibility; and a documented review of available compensation and hiring authorities.

Use the comparison as a warning, not a rank equivalence

DoDI 5000.66 treats critical acquisition positions as senior acquisition-workforce roles, requires a three-year tenure agreement, and sets a minimum grade of GS-14/equivalent or O-5. That does not make any GS grade a military-rank equivalent. It establishes senior civilian acquisition work as mission-capacity infrastructure.

Profiles are illustrative, not workforce averages or universal job equivalents. The tax gross-up is a sensitivity, not individual tax advice. Compensation is a credible mission-capacity risk, not proof of causation.

OPEN THE LIVE MATH

federalpayparity.org/evidence/
federalpayparity.org/methodology/
federalpayparity.org/data/

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Department of the Air Force - Sentinel Nunn-McCurdy review
2. Hill AFB - Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center fact sheet
3. OPM - General Schedule
4. DoDI 5000.66 - Defense Acquisition Workforce
5. GAO-19-509 - Defense Acquisition Workforce
6. OPM - recruitment, relocation, and retention incentives
7. SSA - OASDI contribution and benefit base