

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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<http://oversight.house.gov>

January 20, 2016

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

Federal agencies have authority to use special pay authorities and incentives to help address mission critical skills gaps or other positions that are difficult to fill. These include authorities created by the President and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regarding: (1) pay for certain occupations or job series based on such factors as comparability with non-federal salaries; (2) additions to pay and allowances based on location such as remote station allowances; (3) additions to pay based on skills or position such as pay for critical positions and retention bonuses; and (4) "premium pay" that is typically awarded for working weekends, holidays, or late shifts, or for doing hazardous work.

Given the need to recruit and retain highly sought after employees in competitive fields such as cyber-security, it is critical that agencies make appropriate, effective use of special pay rates, incentives, and premium pay.

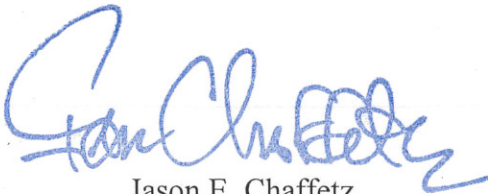
I am writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) review the extent to which agencies have tools in place to make informed decisions about special pay rates and oversee their usage. Specifically, I request that GAO:

1. describe various special pay authorities, including critical position and premium pay, available to federal agencies for paying employees, the circumstances of their use, and mechanisms to ensure they are used in a cost-effective manner and consistent with applicable laws and regulations;
2. evaluate the extent to which agencies are currently using premium pay and other special pay authorities to address mission-critical skills gaps, as well as their effectiveness in improving recruitment and retention; and

3. identify whether agencies could be using special pay authorities, including critical position and premium pay, more effectively, as well as any challenges agencies currently face in attempting to utilize such authorities.

Thank you for your attention to this request. Please contact Janel Fitzhugh or Christopher D'Angelo of Majority staff at (202) 225-5074, or Lena Chang or Courtney French of the minority staff at (202) 225-5051, if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Jason E. Chaffetz  
Chairman



Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member