

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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Opening Statement Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly

Substitute Amendment to H.R. 3244, a Bill to Provide for Annual Surveys of Federal Employees

July 19, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Subcommittee Chairman Meadows and Representative Hice for their leadership and for working with me on H.R. 3244, of which I am proud to be an original cosponsor.

Since 2015, Representative Meadows and I have held annual subcommittee hearings on the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and the Partnership for Public Service's *Best Places in the Federal Government* rankings, which rely upon the Survey.

We both believe that the morale and engagement of federal employees is critical to ensuring an efficient and effective federal government because studies have shown that an engaged workforce is a productive workforce.

One important measure of employee engagement is the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. Our bill is a response to a December 2016 final rule published by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) that reduced the number of required questions in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

Although we obtained assurances from OPM that questions would not be eliminated from the 2017 Survey, Representative Meadows and I were concerned that eliminating or changing Survey questions would make it difficult to compare survey results and determine trends.

The Substitute Amendment makes certain technical changes to the introduced bill. The amendment would require OPM to maintain its current responsibility for issuing regulations prescribing the questions that must appear on all agency surveys and the requirement for agencies to make the survey results public, unless doing so would jeopardize national security.

It also would require OPM to submit any survey-related regulation to this Committee and the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs 60 days before issuance. This amendment would enhance this Committee's oversight of OPM's administration of the Survey with a view towards preserving the ability to analyze historic trends.

The only other improvement I would suggest is for us to obtain data on agency use of incentives to encourage employees to participate in the survey.

I will be offering an amendment to the Substitute Amendment on this issue. I urge my colleagues to support both amendments.

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