

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

May 1, 2025

Mr. Charles Ezell
Acting Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Acting Director Ezell:

I write in strong opposition to the recent Office of Personnel Management (OPM) proposed rule to purge and politicize the nonpartisan federal workforce by reclassifying more than 50,000 federal employees under Schedule Policy/Career.¹ The Administration's proposed rule has bipartisan opposition in Congress, because of the devastation it would inflict on the expertise and performance of our federal workforce, which would in turn hurt our constituents and the life-saving services they need and deserve. I strongly urge the Administration to rescind the proposed rule and cease its political assault on our federal workforce. Also, be forewarned: the Administration's full-scale executive power grab through unlawful and other means, of which this rule is a part, is increasingly clear to the American people and risks an immense public backlash with serious political consequences for the Administration and Congressional Republicans.

The bipartisan concerns about this proposal are real, and they are exacerbated by the string of screw-ups committed by the cadre of political loyalists already appointed by President Trump. A few examples of the many mistakes by current, incompetent Trump Administration officials include: Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth sharing sensitive and classified information about an upcoming military operation in two separate Signal group chats—one of which accidentally included an *Atlantic* reporter along with senior cabinet officials,² and another that involved his wife, brother, and personal lawyer;³ the Department of Government Efficiency firing and immediately scrambling to rehire hundreds of employees at the agency responsible for

¹ 90 Fed. Reg. 17182 (Apr. 23, 2025).

² *The Trump Administration Accidentally Texted Me Its War Plans*, The Atlantic (Mar. 24, 2025) (online at www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/trump-administration-accidentally-texted-me-its-war-plans/682151/).

³ *Hegseth shared detailed military plans in second Signal chat that included his wife and brother*, CNN (Apr. 21, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/04/20/politics/hegseth-second-signal-chat-military-plans/index.html).

managing the nation's nuclear stockpile;⁴ and the Administration's admitted accidental deportation of a Maryland man to a foreign prison in El Salvador and its refusal to facilitate his return in defiance of the Supreme Court.⁵ The list of mistakes goes on.

The proposed rule removes civil service protections that prevent career federal employees from being terminated for partisan political reasons. Civil service protections allow the federal government to recruit and retain an expert federal workforce free from political pressures and threats and prevent them from being replaced with inexperienced partisan loyalists. The career federal workforce is comprised of employees hired based on their knowledge, skills, and ability to perform their duties—as opposed to their partisan affiliation or political connections.

The federal workforce's expertise and experience is the lifeblood of the federal government. For decades, both Republican and Democratic administrations have relied on the institutional knowledge and expertise of impartial career federal employees to ensure constituents and communities get the services they need and deserve from government. OPM's proposed rule to reclassify tens of thousands of career federal employees under a proposed Schedule Policy/Career would allow experienced civil servants to be terminated, not on merit, but for political reasons. This weakens the federal workforce, making it difficult to retain experienced staff and rewarding federal employees for political loyalty rather than their knowledge and experience. We must continue to keep the government in competition for the best and brightest talent and not limit our recruitment efforts to those who are the most loyal to the president.

Nonpartisan civil servants, 30% of whom are veterans, help families in the wake of hurricanes and deadly fires, facilitate access to lifesaving payments like Social Security and unemployment insurance, and protect our national security. This rule would allow the Trump Administration to summarily terminate a veteran who devoted their post-service career to the federal government and replace them with a 20-something political operative whose primary qualification is unquestioned fealty to the MAGA movement. Reclassifying nonpartisan federal employees so they can be replaced with President Trump's inexperienced loyalists will undermine public service and jeopardize the well-being and safety for all Americans.

I strongly urge you to stop your efforts to purge and politicize our federal workforce, and request a briefing on OPM's proposed rule on Schedule Policy/Career by May 15, 2025.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. The Committee also has legislative jurisdiction over federal personnel. Full compliance with my requests is necessary, in part to determine whether legislative reforms are needed to ensure the continued security of our federal civil service

⁴ *Trump officials fired nuclear staff not realizing they oversee the country's weapons stockpile, sources say*, CNN (Feb. 14, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/14/climate/nuclear-nnsa-firings-trump/index.html).

⁵ *Trump administration admits 'error' in deporting Maryland resident to El Salvador*, Politico (Apr. 1, 2025) (online at www.politico.com/news/2025/04/01/salvador-man-maryland-deported-mistake-00262870).

employees. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman