

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

June 2, 2025

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

Dear Acting Director Ezell:

We write with great concern about the memorandum posted on the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) website on May 29, 2025, which would force federal job seekers to express support for President Trump as part of their applications. The memorandum integrates a blatant loyalty test to President Trump into the mandatory essay questions for all applicants for federal employment at or above the GS-05 level.¹ Such a loyalty test is antithetical to the concept of an expert, nonpartisan civil service and will only serve to degrade and politicize the services Americans need from their government. I urge you to remove this question from any potential application materials for those seeking to serve their country through federal jobs, and to provide documentation on how this ill-advised question was formulated and included in the memorandum.

The newly issued memorandum—intended to be guidance for hiring at every federal agency—mandates that “all [f]ederal job vacancy announcements graded at GS-05 or above will include four short, free-response essay questions[,]” including one that asks: “How would you help advance the President’s Executive Orders and policy priorities in this role? Identify one or two relevant policy Executive Orders or policy initiatives that are significant to you, and explain how you would help implement them if hired.”²

Every federal worker is legally required to take an oath of office that they will “support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”³ The oath does not require federal workers to swear to protect and defend executive orders or policy initiatives. It does not require that workers have loyalty to a President or to a political party. In fact, the very ethos of our civil service is that it serves the Constitution and the

¹ Memorandum from Vince Haley, Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy and Charles Ezell, Acting Director, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, to Heads and Acting Heads of Departments and Agencies, *Merit Hiring Plan* (May 29, 2025) (online at www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/latest-memos/merit-hiring-plan/).

² *Id.* at 10.

³ 5 U.S.C. §3331.

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American people. That mandate transcends any political position or capriciously signed executive order.

Our civil service should operate unflaggingly and unencumbered in its commitment to the preservation and defense of our Constitution. Your memorandum's guidance not only endangers the quality of our civil service by prioritizing loyalty over expertise, but also imperils the government services upon which Americans rely. The Department of Veterans Affairs should be focused on hiring the physicians and nurses who can deliver the best care possible to our veterans—not whether those physicians and nurses can convey a partisan interest to “advance the President’s Executive Orders.” A senior who needs help with a change to their Social Security benefits does not need a claims representative at the Social Security Administration who wants to identify “one or two relevant Executive Orders or policy initiatives that are significant”—they need efficient, compassionate, and fair treatment.

To inform our legislative efforts and in accordance with our oversight responsibilities, please respond to the following questions by June 16, 2025:

1. All correspondence and communications related to the inclusion of this question in federal applications, including but not limited to those conducted via email, Slack, Signal, and any other digital communication;
2. A full timeline of implementation for the use of this question in any application for federal employment; and
3. Any and all communications between the White House, the Office of Management and Budget, and OPM regarding the evaluation of applicant responses to this question in federal job applications.

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. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,



Stephen F. Lynch
Acting Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman