

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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June 6, 2025

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

RE: Proposed Rule – Improving Performance, Accountability, and Responsiveness in the Civil Service [OPM-2025-0004]

Dear Acting Director Ezell:

I write in strong opposition to the proposed rule the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently published to purge and politicize the nonpartisan federal workforce by reclassifying 50,000 federal employees under Schedule Policy/Career.¹ The Administration's effort to devastate the federal workforce, by way of this proposed rule, would have the greater effect of harming Americans and the life-saving services that they rely on and deserve. I strongly urge the Administration to rescind this proposed rule and immediately cease its political assault on the federal workforce that serves the American public.

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 that 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

¹ 90 Fed. Reg. 17182 (Apr. 23, 2025).

best and brightest talent and not limit our recruitment efforts to those who are the most loyal to the president.

The Administration's recent cuts to the civilian federal workforce have had serious consequences, highlighting the importance of experienced, nonpartisan federal employees. After the Trump administration eliminated 7,000 jobs at the Social Security Administration (SSA), which serves 73 million Americans, retirees and disabled individuals have experienced repeated website outages and login issues with their Social Security accounts.² Concerns are being raised about the agency's ability to address these problems, especially after the new SSA commissioner, Frank Bisignano, admitted that he had to look up the agency when first offered the position.³

Additionally, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has cut over a quarter of its full-time staff since the Administration took office, and the current acting head of the agency reportedly was unaware that the United States has a hurricane season.⁴ Meanwhile, St. Louis is still waiting for aid from FEMA as it struggles to recover from a tornado that struck on May 16, causing over a billion dollars in damage, killing five people, and injuring dozens.⁵ This has been one of the slowest federal government responses to a disaster aid request from Missouri.⁶

At the Department of Veterans Affairs, the termination of over 2,000 employees in the last few months has left veterans without access to critical treatment for diseases like head and neck cancer and left homeless veterans without temporary housing assistance.⁷ These examples reveal the real-world impact of removing experienced career federal workers with the essential subject-matter expertise needed to effectively serve the public.

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

² *Social Security Website Keeps Crashing, as DOGE Demands Cuts to IT Staff*, The Washington Post (Apr. 7, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/04/07/social-security-website-crashes-musk-trump/).

³ *New Head of Social Security, Hired from Wall Street, Tells Staff He Had to Google the Job When He Was Offered It*, ABC News (May 22, 2025) (online at www.abcnews.go.com/US/new-head-social-security-hired-wall-street-tells/story?id=122075152).

⁴ *Acting FEMA Chief Told Staff He Didn't Know About U.S. Hurricane Season*, The New York Times (June 2, 2025) (online at www.nytimes.com/2025/06/02/us/politics/fema-david-richardson-hurricane-season.html).

⁵ *St. Louis Mayor Complains FEMA Isn't on the Ground After Major Tornado*, USA Today (May 20, 2025) (online at www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/05/20/fema-not-helping-after-st-louis-tornadoes/83746010007/); *St. Louis Waits For Aid as FEMA Response to Missouri Disasters is Slowest in 15 Years*, Missouri Independent (June 4, 2025) (online at www.missouriindependent.com/2025/06/04/st-louis-waits-for-aid-as-fema-response-to-missouri-disasters-is-slowest-in-15-years/).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Internal VA Emails Reveal How Trump Cuts Jeopardize Veterans' Care, Including To "Life-Saving Cancer Trials"*, ProPublica (May 6, 2025) (online at www.propublica.org/article/trump-veterans-affairs-budget-staff-cuts-jeopardize-cancer-research); *Trump administration plans 15 percent cut to VA workforce*, The Washington Post (Mar. 5, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/03/05/veterans-affairs-cut-employees-trump-doge/).

Mr. Charles Ezell

Page 3

unemployment insurance, and protect our national security.⁸ Reclassifying nonpartisan federal employees so they can be replaced with a president's inexperienced loyalists will undermine public service and jeopardize the well-being and safety of all Americans. I urge you to rescind this rule.

Sincerely,



Stephen F. Lynch
Acting Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

⁸ *Public Servants Twice Over: Veterans in the Federal Workforce*, Partnership for Public Service (Mar. 13, 2025) (online at <https://ourpublicservice.org/blog/public-servants-twice-over-veterans-in-the-federal-workforce/>).