

**UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU!  
RECRUITMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,  
THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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MAY 7, 2009  
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**THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2009**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT  
MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE,  
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:31 p.m., in room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Daniel K. Akaka, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senators Akaka, Voinovich, and Burriss.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AKAKA**

Senator AKAKA. The Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, will come to order.

I want to welcome our witnesses with much aloha and thank you for joining us today to discuss Federal Government recruitment. This is such an important issue that often does not receive the attention it deserves, and I appreciate your work on this topic. And I just have a feeling that this new team will run with it and so will we here in the Congress. I look forward to great years for the workers of our government and for all of you.

I cannot think of a better time for us to focus on Federal recruitment than during Public Service Recognition Week, which we are in at the present time. This week, we honor the dedicated men and women working in Federal, State and local governments who are the bedrock of our Nation's workforce.

Around the country, people are taking time to recognize the contributions of public servants and promote careers in public service. For example, there is an exhibit on the National Mall this week, highlighting more than 100 Federal civilian and military agencies through the weekend.

Recruitment is the lifeline of a vibrant and talented workforce from every entry level position to the senior executive service. Finding talented and dedicated employees is essential to carrying out the missions of Federal agencies.

The Federal Government offers competitive benefits and recruitment incentives, which helps to make it an employer of choice.

However, if agencies are not doing the leg work of recruitment and creating a candidate-friendly process, they may be undermining their appeal. While there are pockets of Federal agencies that see the value of investing in these areas, all agencies must do better.

Too many agencies take a passive and reactive approach to recruitment. When a vacancy occurs, they post lengthy and confusing job announcements on a Web site and just hope the right people apply. Agencies should develop forward-looking strategic plans that assess critical skills, gaps, and target highly qualified populations.

Such plans should take into account both expected and unexpected vacancies. Human resources professionals need better training to develop these strategic efforts. Managers must be engaged throughout the process to ensure that the skills they seek are reflected in job advertisements and applications.

The Federal Government also needs to make the hiring process more user friendly. Candidates should not have to abandon their Federal job search because of frustration with the process. Vacancy announcements should clearly explain the job's duties, qualifications, and requirements to apply. Agencies must work to make the hiring process simpler and quicker while protecting the merit system principles. We must remember that the very best candidates may have a variety of career opportunities. They are not likely to wade through a slow, complicated, and uninformative process. Now, more than ever, agencies have an opportunity to make the Federal Government the employer of choice.

In his inaugural address, President Obama encouraged renewal, and a renewed spirit, of national service for this and future generations. This renewed spirit of service is attracting people who otherwise may not have considered Federal service.

We cannot afford to have State recruitment strategies hinder our ability to build the next generation of Federal employees. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) estimates that 30 percent of the Federal workforce will retire in the next 5 years. We already have critical skills gaps in many fields, including acquisition, foreign language, engineering, human resources, information technology, and veterinary medicine. Many highly qualified professionals in these fields may be searching for new jobs in this difficult economy. Improving Federal recruitment will begin to close these critical skills gaps.

To help agencies address problems in Federal recruitment and hiring, Senator Voinovich, and I recently introduced the Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act—S. 736. Among other provisions, the bill addresses Federal recruitment issues by requiring Federal agencies to develop strategic workforce plans that include recruitment strategies and a focus on critical skills gaps. Additionally, S. 736 would require streamlined, clear, and concise job announcements that are free from confusing jargon and posted and targeted in strategic locations.

Agencies need to adapt, just as the private sector has, to the culture of the next generation of Federal workers. For example, agencies should use inexpensive new media marketing tools to attract young people into Federal service, and agencies should create new pipelines into the job market by targeting candidates who might not have considered public service until recently. The Federal Gov-

ernment is the largest employer in the United States, and Federal service is a noble profession.

This week, Public Service Recognition Week, we celebrate those men and women who make a commitment to serve their government in the military or civilian service. In honoring these employees, we have an opportunity to inspire the next generation to pursue Federal careers.

I look forward to hearing about the efforts made by OPM to address shortcomings in Federal recruitment, recommendations from our other witnesses for improvements, and thoughts on the Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act. So I want to welcome the witnesses here on this panel and also on the following panel.

Senator Voinovich, for your opening statement.

#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR VOINOVICH**

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you, Senator Akaka.

This week, we celebrate our Nation's public servants. Tomorrow, I will be in Cleveland meeting with a lot of Federal employees to honor several that have gone way beyond the call of duty. I think it is extremely important that we honor these folks that have made a difference for us.

The legislation that you talked about is another chapter in something that the two of us have been working on for almost a decade, and that is to improve the environment for people coming to work for the Federal Government, recruiting them, retaining them, and rewarding them. And I am running out of time; I am leaving. I have a little bit less than 2 years, and I really would like to see that legislation pass because I think it is needed.

Mr. Berry, I know that you are new to the job over there, but the fact is, we have to get this done. I am so tired of year after year of running into people who say the hiring system does not work.

We have been dealing with this human capital crisis, and roughly one-third of the government's top scientists, engineers, physicians, mathematicians, economists, and other specialized professionals are going to be leaving in the next 5 years. The economy may have some impact on their decision making, reflective of the overall U.S. labor force. And while the economy may lead some to extend, as I mentioned, their Federal careers, we need to think about this wonderful opportunity that we have. We should take advantage of it.

Struggling to meet the challenges of transferring knowledge to the next generation, agencies are also being tasked with hiring individuals to ensure the stimulus dollars are well spent. We are interested in what is happening in that regard, although, I think we found out, Senator Akaka, that the majority of that money is going out for Medicaid and I think 18 percent for education. But there are departments that we need to be looking at. In meeting our hiring challenges, the government must target its effort to recruit the best and brightest from the increasing number of employees entering and re-entering the job market.

I am hoping that this hearing today will shed some light on where we are at.

Mr. Berry, you have had a chance to be in the saddle just a short time, but I'm interested in hearing your snapshots of what you see your challenges are.

Ms. Duncan, as you know, I have worked tirelessly on that National Security Personnel System (NSPS) to improve performance in the Department of Defense (DOD). It goes back a long time and many hours with Gordon England. And I am interested to see how that is coming along because, I hope, as a professional organization, where people are interested in coming to work and being rewarded for the work that they do, I think that is an added benefit of attracting the right people to the Defense Department, and perhaps maybe look at some other departments.

Ms. Lovelace, you and I have talked a lot, and I am interested to see what you folks are doing.

So thank you, Senator Akaka.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Voinovich.

We have with us on this panel, John Berry, who is the Director of the Office of Personnel Management; Susan Duncan, who is the Director of Civilian Personnel Management for the Army; and Gail Lovelace, who is Chief Human Capital Officer of the General Services Administration.

As you know, it is a custom of this Subcommittee to swear in all witnesses, so I ask you to please rise and raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give this Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Mr. BERRY. I do.

Ms. DUNCAN. I do.

Ms. LOVELACE. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Let the record note that the witnesses responded in the affirmative.

Before we begin, I want to remind you that although your oral statement is limited to 5 minutes, your full statement will be included in the record.

Mr. Berry, will you please proceed with your statement?

**TESTIMONY OF HON. JOHN BERRY,<sup>1</sup> DIRECTOR, U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman and Senator Voinovich, thank you so much for the opportunity to be here with you today, and I want to thank both of you for your incredible leadership on creating Public Service Week and allowing us to honor and recognize the people who serve our country day in and day out. And thanks to each of you for your leadership over the years and all that you have done there.

It is also an honor to be at this table with both Ms. Duncan and Ms. Lovelace, who have forgotten more about human resource management than I will ever learn. They both have been leaders in this area, and I am very honored to be with them both today, look forward, and am excited to work with both of them in the months and years ahead.

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Mr. Berry appears in the Appendix on page 39.



I appreciate you giving us the opportunity to share with you my commitment as the recently confirmed director of OPM to create a dynamic and responsive recruiting strategy and hiring process. I am convinced there is no other priority more important than making the Federal recruitment and hiring process as transparent, efficient, effective, and user friendly as possible, from the perspective of both the job applicant and the Federal agencies that need these critical skills to accomplish their missions.

In my short time, I have learned a lot about what OPM needs to do to help us move forward into the 21st Century. We are at the table today with two agencies that are both leaders in this effort and there is much progress to be done.

Your legislation, I think, is a great first step, and it would be my hope that we can actually accomplish almost everything in your legislation through administrative action this year, and we are going to work to do that. So I look forward to working with you and your staff to, hopefully, advance this as quickly as we can.

To show you how seriously we have taken the challenge in the past year at OPM, not necessarily me, but our wonderful staff there have done a couple things, and many of them in concert with folks at this table.

OPM, in collaboration with the Federal Acquisition Institute, introduced the idea of working as one Federal Government to recruit and hire a contract specialist at the entry level. Representatives—we brought together folks from the acquisition community, agencies throughout the government, and they tackled this down, and they were able to take a 75-page position description down to four pages and get it into plain language.

It was an amazing process. I have been very impressed with it. I have shared it with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). I have discussed it with the senior staff at the White House. This is something we want to take, and take this process throughout the government. It has been an incredible success, and it is one that we can build upon in the future.

Building on that, then OPM worked with our Federal agencies in the government to take on 20 other mission-critical, heavily-recruited occupations to, again, sort of achieve that plain language objective, and have been able to do that, essentially abolishing the old knowledge, skills, and abilities approach and the essays that were involved with that, and moving to a resume-based approach that allows plain English. You and I could go on the Web site, read them, know exactly what we are applying for, and develop and target our resume accordingly.

Some of these initiatives that we have talked about here, we keep in mind, as both senators have mentioned, in the dark challenges we find ourselves on the economic front is also a huge opportunity for us on the recruitment front right now, and we need to take advantage of that as we move forward.

We also have an opportunity and a responsibility to help in some areas. I am specifically interested in thinking about a number of the layoffs that are being faced in the Michigan, Detroit, Ohio areas of people who are in the car industries. These are engineers and some of our best and our brightest.

Well, we have a need in all of our Federal agencies. And one of the things I am going to work with my colleagues on is to see if we can create a job fair this summer, where we can try to identify some of those people who might have been laid off from the auto industry, or who are threatened with layoffs, to let them know, and see if we can match those skills up with the Federal Government and get them into jobs where they can do a great job.

Finally, I would like to just touch quickly on student hiring. While the numbers are not as dire as is often reported, we nonetheless need to do much better in terms of not only drawing students into our intern programs, but then converting them into permanent hires when they are outstanding individuals.

One of our key initiatives that will take place this June is to pull academic leaders together from vocational, technical, high schools, community colleges, and universities to discuss with them how we can do this right and how we can build that, and working with some of the programs that the Partnership for Public Service has put in place. We need to ensure the academic world clearly understands our needs, our pipeline, and can match up with them the resources.

Finally—and I apologize, I am running out of time real quickly. Just to touch on something I am going to immediately put in place. You have heard of tiger teams. We are going to create a new team idea called a wolf pack. I am going to break through the silo approach that we have in our agency at OPM, and we are going to draw the strongest people from each of our silos at OPM, create a wolf pack, and challenge them to take down the elk of hiring process, which has been an ongoing nightmare to all of us over so many years.

My hope and my pledge to this Subcommittee, and to my colleagues at the table, if they are going to help, is I hope this year we can nail this, built on what has already been put in place, but then take out whatever else we need to do to get this done so that throughout the government, we have a clean, clear hiring process, and I am very excited by that.

We need to do that, obviously, without sacrificing our merit system or our veterans' preference programs. My pledge to you is that we will be very sensitive and careful as we sculpt that and do that. But I will look forward to coming back here a year from now, and hopefully with Ms. Duncan and Ms. Lovelace, where we can show you—rather than talking about what we hope to do, we will show you what we have done. And I look forward to doing that.

Thank you, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Berry, for that enthusiastic testimony.

Now, we will hear from Ms. Duncan. Please go ahead with your testimony.

**TESTIMONY OF SUSAN L. DUNCAN,<sup>1</sup> DIRECTOR, CIVILIAN PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

Ms. DUNCAN. Senator Akaka, Senator Voinovich, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Civilian Personnel of the Army. Army civilians provide vital support to soldiers and families in this era of persistent conflict. They share full responsibility for mission accomplishment by delivering combat support and combat service support at home, abroad, and on the battlefield. More than ever, Army civilians are an absolutely essential component of readiness. Today, the Army Civilian Corps is over 287,000 strong with 5,600 currently serving in harm's way in the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

My testimony today provides you my assessment of the challenges facing the Army Civilian Corps, the human capital strategy, and supporting actions the Army will undertake in the coming years to address these challenges. I will share some key data that reflect the scope of our recruitment challenges, as well as some key performance metrics. Most importantly, I will share initiatives that the Army has taken to invigorate its outreach recruitment efforts for the civilian talent it requires.

Our strategic human capital planning tools are some of the best analytical and forecasting capabilities in the government and have been adopted by OPM for government-wide use. In addition, our approach to workforce planning has been adopted for training government agencies by OPM and was recognized by the Human Capital Management symposium for Defense.

Together with the capabilities of our tools and our comprehensive approach to workforce planning, we have been able to make a significant difference in several key decision areas. A few examples include the areas of base realignment and closure planning; the sizing of the overall requirements for the civilian hiring needed to sustain our capabilities; in-depth assessment of mission-critical occupations for identifying the shortfalls and the needed mitigation strategies; projected retirements; attrition rates; intern allocations; and succession planning. In addition, we have also completed competency assessments of over 45,000 positions in mission-critical occupations.

In 2008, the Department of the Army Civilian Human Resources professionals filled over 122,000 recruitment actions, 48,000 of which were external hires new to the Army. To fill these positions, the Army opened 81,620 vacancy announcements. Almost 6.2 million applications were submitted and processed. This represents an average of 64 applications per vacancy. While there is rarely a vacancy that does not attract some applicants, there are critical, hard-to-fill jobs for which traditional recruiting methods do not produce sufficient numbers of well-qualified applicants.

We have successfully grown the Army civilian workforce over the last few years; yet, our capacity is significantly stressed to meet known and projected hiring initiatives over the next few years. The Base Realignment and Closure Act of 2005 (BRAC) will require the movement of over 23,000 positions to different geographical areas.

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<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Ms. Duncan appears in the Appendix on page 43.

Our analysis of past BRAC actions indicated that, traditionally, only about 30 percent of the current workforce will move with their current organization. This projection may move upward based upon today's economy. We project that over 56,000 additional BRAC recruit actions must be filled between now and Fiscal Year 2011 to provide commanders the talent they need to meet critical missions. This is in addition to the over 120,000 actions needed to sustain current operations. The Army projects hiring up to 4,000 employees as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and a significant number of new civilians as part of the current insourcing initiative.

Our analytic and forecasting capabilities, as well as our approach to workforce planning, has helped the Army join the ranks as one of the best places to work in the Federal Government in 2007. This ranking was determined by the Partnership for Public Service and American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation.

We regularly project approaching retirements and hiring needs with a significant degree of precision. These projections help target recruitment needs and serve as the basis for allocation of centrally-funded intern positions. Our occupational hiring levels are tracked against the projected recruitment needs, making adjustments as required. The army civilian occupational requirements are also evaluated against high-demand occupations in the civilian labor force so that we can develop future recruitment strategies ahead of potential shortfalls.

The Army civilian workforce relies on automated tools and technology to manage our hiring processes. We adopted a single resume format that can be used for any vacancy, which the Army civilian workforce has. It is then easy to self-nominate for any vacancy with this resume on file. We are exploring options today that will more specifically target candidate pools and data-mined existing resume repositories to identify potential candidates that possess the competencies we need.

While applicants are required to use Web-based resume builder to apply for positions, Army provides them real-time access to an automated system that gives them the status of every position for which they have applied. They know when their application has been received and processed, whether they have been determined qualified and/or eligible, and whether they are referred to the selecting official. They are also able to quickly learn when a selection has been made. At any stage in the process, they are provided access to HR staff via an automated help desk that can address their questions regarding decisions that have been made in regards to their application.

The Army regularly uses nine direct-hire authorities to expedite hiring. These include 24 healthcare occupations and five engineer occupations that support recovery efforts in New Orleans from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We also use this tool for 82 medical positions supporting Walter Reed's mission to care for our Nation's wounded warriors.

To fill our mid and senior level contracting positions, the Army began using the Department of Defense expedited hiring authority for acquisition positions. The Army has used recruitment fairs and

partnered with local communities to address hiring needs associated with BRAC 2005 and other shortage specialties.

These job fairs and recruiting efforts are just a few examples of hundreds of similar events conducted across the Army. We continue to aggressively work with DOD and OPM to provide managers the tools and authorities needed to effectively compete in local, regional, and national labor markets.

In 2007, the Army proposed a new competitive appointment authority for the spouses of military members who were killed or totally disabled in the line of duty. These military spouses are called upon to be the chief source of income for their families, but without current Federal employment status, they had no entry to Federal jobs absent the current competitive examining process. This initiative resulted in the publication of Executive Order 13473, signed on September 25, 2008 by the president.

Army leaders at all levels recognize the strategic value of human capital planning and view civilians as strategic investments. We improved our recruitment of qualified talent. We have human capital data that spans decades and seek to improve capabilities to utilize it more effectively in the overall management of the Army civilian personnel.

Our recruiting efforts today are critical to a viable, diverse, highly-qualified workforce of tomorrow. Our human resource professionals, although stressed by the persistent conflict, remain dedicated to see this mission through. We will continue to work these issues, best practices, and lessons learned with our partners and refine our strategies for recruiting and sustaining our workforce.

Thank you, sirs, for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Duncan, for your testimony.

Now we will hear from Gail Lovelace, your testimony.

**TESTIMONY OF GAIL T. LOVELACE,<sup>1</sup> CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER, U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

Ms. LOVELACE. Good afternoon, Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Voinovich. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the General Services Administration (GSA). I am especially honored to be here with you to discuss recruitment and retention of a talented Federal workforce during Public Service Recognition Week.

GSA was established in 1949 to provide a centralized delivery system of products and services to the Federal Government, leveraging our buying power to get the best value for taxpayers. When I started in GSA a few years ago, we were an agency of 40,000 employees. Our mission has not changed, yet we stand here today an organization of 12,000. While we certainly do not have the numbers that my colleague at Army has, I believe that both of our organizations rely highly on a competent workforce to accomplish our mission.

Our continued ranking as one of the best places to work in the Federal Government shows that we have placed high emphasis on

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Ms. Lovelace appears in the Appendix on page 52.

workforce engagement, and this has contributed to GSA's ability to be in a better position not only to attract but to retain talent.

Recently, there has been a good deal of concern about hiring in the Federal Government. Many say that the process is too slow. When the process is slow, reasons can come from multiple sources: The manager, the applicant, the human resources professional, our policies, our technology, our processes. Whatever the reason, we need to break this cycle and improve the hiring process across government. We need to be bold; we need to be visible.

Even in this environment, GSA has been able to attract top talent. We have taken a number of steps to enhance recruitment efforts so that we are positioned to bring the best and the brightest to work at our agency. While we have made progress in some areas, we continue to face challenges in others, and we need to do more; we are doing more.

In February, we launched a new initiative called Lean Hiring. This initiative focuses on specific actions that can be taken to improve the timeliness and quality of our hiring process. Through Lean Hiring, we are conducting a top to bottom review of policies, processes, performance measures, technology, the skill level of our HR staff, management's understanding of the process, and communication with applicants.

All of this will be used to determine how we can turn around the reality and/or perception of slow hiring. Our goal is to expedite the process while continuing to hire top talent. We are looking for immediate quick wins and long-term solutions that focuses on defining the current State, the ideal State, and the gaps.

We have also put a spotlight focus on the recruitment and retention of our acquisition workforce. Clearly, acquisition is a critical part of GSA's mission. Our efforts in this area have increased and will continue to increase over the coming months.

As I close, please understand that GSA will improve hiring. We will be bold and visible. We will improve the overall hiring experience for managers, for applicants, and for our HR professionals. I look forward to working with our new director of the Office of Personnel Management and my fellow members of the Chief Human Capital Officer's Council to develop government-wide solutions to address issues with the hiring process.

Chairman Akaka, I want to thank you again for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. Thanks for all that you do and Senator Voinovich, if he were here, to support the Federal workforce. And Happy Public Service Recognition Week. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Lovelace, for your testimony.

I am glad to hear the optimism that is in your testimonies and look forward to working with you.

I have a question to all of you, to this panel. I hope that you all have had a chance to review S. 736, the Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act, which Senator Voinovich and I introduced. The bill has a number of provisions related to recruitment. For example, agencies must develop targeted and strategic recruitment plans and draft clear, concise job vacancy announcements.

I would like to hear your views on the value of strategic workforce planning for recruitment, why more agencies are not doing this already, as well as any additional thoughts you might have on S. 736.

Mr. Berry.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, I think it is—as I mentioned, I think it is a great bill. And I think almost every idea in it—I was talking with our staff on the way up here as we were reviewing this and getting ready for this testimony. Almost every idea in this, I think we are able to do without legislation. And it would be my hope that as we seek to reform this process, that we can take each of the steps that you have identified—which every one of them are key pieces to the puzzle. You do not want to leave any of them out. So we have to have all of that input as we move forward in terms of an overhaul of the hiring and recruitment process.

It starts with good workforce planning. When you can think ahead as to where your bubble is, where your need is, what is your need going to be, then you can develop your targeted recruitment from that, and a lot of other things then flow. Otherwise, you do shoot in the dark.

But my hope is—I think it is great legislation. If it moves quickly, we will look forward to working with you to make it a reality. But I also think that we could also move forward without its passage and adopt a lot of these things just administratively. And I think working with your staff and Senator Voinovich's staff, and the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council, I think there is many of these things that we can put in place and adopt as good practice throughout the government and just get them done.

Senator AKAKA. Yes.

Mr. Berry, Mr. Stier's written testimony suggests that Congress consider requiring OPM to create a government-wide strategic workforce plan, taking into account the multi-sector workforce.

What are your views on that recommendation?

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, I think one of the difficulties in being here in a month and looking at this, is I think the reason why a lot of past efforts have run aground on the shoals, is they tried to do too much at once.

The hiring process has sort of five elements to it: Workforce planning, recruitment, hiring itself, bringing them in, getting them through security and suitability, and then initial training.

Now, if we try to tackle all five at once, my view is—and that is what has been attempted. It is kind of like trying to swallow the—as I mentioned before, swallowing the camel whole. And my focus in the first year is going to be to look at the middle three of that puzzle, to look at recruitment, hiring, and security suitability, and see if we can streamline and build on the successes that we have, the points that are on the board now in terms of what we have been able to do with the contract specialist and those other 20 positions. And the defense and the intelligence agencies have done some great things in working with us. I think together we have worked through the backlog on the security clearance issue now and the suitability stuff.

So we are very close to nailing it, and I do not want to lose that progress. And so, in year one, my focus is going to be on those three, core, center middle functions.

Now, that is not to say workforce planning and training for our initial entry level, you can ignore it. You cannot. But what I am going to do is I think I am going to try to tackle—we are going to look into that in much more depth in year two and year three.

So I think we have to get the middle part right first, and then move to that. I am not saying ignore it, but in terms of priority and focus of time and energy—if we had unlimited resources, unlimited staff, sure, you might be able to try to do it all. But that is the approach I am going to take, sir, at OPM, is to start in the middle, then work out to the edge.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you for your response.

Let me get back to the original question for Ms. Duncan and Ms. Lovelace; that is your views on the value of strategic workforce planning for recruitment and your thoughts on S. 736.

Ms. Duncan.

Ms. DUNCAN. Yes, sir. It is absolutely vital, as Mr. Berry has said, to have strategic planning for your hiring, less you do not know what you need to hire. You are not using the taxpayers' dollars in the best method if you do not have the people that you need for the future.

It is in everyone's best interest to use their strategic planning up front so we know what we need. And it is not that we know what we need next week or next month or next year; we need to know what we need 4 years, 5 years, 10 years out, because that is how long in some occupations it takes to grow one of those employees. So that is why that strategic planning is so important to go far enough out.

Sir, I kind of like to use the analogy of our hiring processes have gotten to be like gaining weight, a pound here, two pounds there. You know, it really does not, at the time, seem like a big deal. But then all of a sudden, you wake up one day, and you have gained 40 pounds, and it is a crisis.

Well, we have done that to the hiring process. We have put on a reporting requirement here, we have put on a regulation there, we have put on different procedure here. And all of a sudden, we have this hiring process that is just too fat to move forward.

So we need to put it on a diet. We need to take away some of those things, such as writing knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), that will streamline the process. We do not need to put any additional pounds on. I would be very concerned about any reports that could not be automated, because in order to do manual reports, the HR people who need to be doing the hiring have to do those reports. So I do not want to draw them away from their main mission.

Also, as I testified, we do over 6 million applications a year. We have to have an automated process for doing that. So I need a process that can be used very efficiently by the applicant and very efficiently by management. So whatever we do has to be an automated process. So that is just something I would keep in mind.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Duncan.

Ms. DUNCAN. Thank you, sir.



Senator AKAKA. Ms. Lovelace.

Ms. LOVELACE. Yes. Chairman Akaka, I believe workforce planning is critical to any recruitment and attracting of talent into the organization, because you really need to link your workforce planning to the mission goals of the organization. And that is the time in which you engage managers early in the process so that you are making that strong linkage between workforce planning and the business needs of the organization for today and looking forward.

We have clearly been doing workforce planning for a number of years now. As we initiate our lean hiring process, we are looking to see how we improve that process; how do we make it a more agile process so that when we have to address some significant change, either in our business, or something like the Recovery Act being passed, where we really have to shift our focus and our resources, how do we change our workforce process so that it is more agile and able to meet our current needs?

So that is clearly part of our process, trying to determine how we change what we have done in workforce planning. It is absolutely a key component of any recruitment effort that any agency undertakes.

Now, your question about S. 736. I certainly read S. 736. In fact, the lean hiring teams have actually taken it and done a side-by-side analysis with some of the efforts that we have under lean hiring. And I have to tell you, we were quite pleased to see the similarities of what is in S. 736 and what we are doing. And so, we were patting ourselves on the back, so to speak, to say, hey, maybe we are doing something right here. But again, S. 736, lean hiring, we still have a lot of work to do, and we believe we are on the path to make that happen.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for your responses. Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. Mr. Berry, have you had a chance to look at the number of Federal jobs open to external applicants that go to people already in the civil service? In your opinion, what, if any, impact does this have on the effectiveness of the Federal Government's recruitment strategies?

One of the things that Senator Akaka and I worked on was the issue of annual leave tied solely to the employee's years of Federal employment. We changed that, to make the Federal Government more attractive to mid-career professionals. So I would be interested on your comment on that.

The other is this. We have really worked hard on flexibilities. We provided the opportunity to do direct hiring.

We have given these flexibilities, many of them, and I would like to have you do an inventory of them and find out just how many people are using the direct hire authority. My concern is that a lot of these agencies are not using the tools that we have made available to them.

Could you comment on that?

Mr. BERRY. Senator, I think you have just hit the bullseye, if you will. In 4 weeks on the job, one of the things I have realized is that you have done and given a lot of flexibilities and passed a lot of great ideas that are in the toolbox. And the agencies, a number of us have gotten together and worked up good solutions. But at the

end of the day, it is left to be a voluntary approach. And as is often the case in human nature, somebody who has been doing something a certain way for 25, 30 years says, well, do I have a choice? I can keep doing it like I have been doing it or I can use your new tool, and I am going to have to learn that and work out the kinks. I will keep doing it the old way.

I think we are going to have to work on that. And I, quite frankly, I have already had a good conversation with Peter Orszag at OMB. There are people who have joked. I do not know who to credit the original joke to, but that the Office of Personal Management should be called the Office of Personnel Recommendations; that in many cases is the case.

When we come up with a good idea, and if it works, we need to make it work for everybody, and institute this, and drill these things down with these tools. And so, I am going to look to be a strong partner with OMB, where we are going to try the voluntary approach again because maybe we just have not marketed it right. Maybe we did not explain it right the first time, so we are going to try to make it clear and we are going to make it simpler. But at the end of the day, if it still is not getting used, we have to work with OMB to help make it mandatory and drill these things through the agencies, and get them used and get them done.

One quick example. We were talking about the acquisition. All of us worked awful hard to take that 72-page document down to a four-page document. We went back to one of the agencies and said, "Look, here we have done it. We will give you the computer program. We will train your people. Here is the four-page document." And at the end of the day, which one did they use? The old 72-page document.

We cannot re-invent the wheel and have people going back. We have to make sure they get used. And I think you are dead on with that, Senator, and we are going to figure out how to do that, one way or the other.

Senator VOINOVICH. These are big picture things that I am asking about because you are coming on new. One of the things that we discovered is that within the performance accountability, or the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) plan, so many agencies did not include the human capital elements needed to accomplish the things that the department was undertaking. I wonder if you have had a chance to look at some of those reports to ascertain whether or not people have taken the issue of human capital seriously in terms of their long-range planning.

Mr. BERRY. Just in the last answer, sir, the answer is some have, some have not. In discussing with Senator Akaka to the last question about workforce planning, to the extent of it, all of us would agree it is critically important. But, quite frankly, in many cases, the data and the staffing are not there to do the job in many of the agencies that we need to do to get that.

So I was sort of coming up with a phased approach of year one, of targeting in on the recruitment, the hiring and the security clearance side, to get that right this year, and then hopefully work with OMB and others to get the agencies to build the necessary attention and resources that need to go with it for the human resource/human capital side of the equation; so that when we, next

year, start to work on the workforce planning and the initial training approaches, the agencies will have the staffing and capabilities, that we will do that.

The CHCO Council had their first meeting last week. I convened an emergency meeting of it to discuss the flu, the H1N1 issue, so that we could be making sure that we were addressing what needed to be addressed from the human capital side on that equation. But our first formal meeting is actually next week, May 12.

So Ms. Lovelace and I have met and are getting ready for that, and we look forward to identifying across the board where are the weak spots so that we can go to OMB together, the CHCO Council can elevate that and say, look, here is something you have to help us pay attention to, and you have to get the agencies, and the agency heads, and the deputy secretaries, and others to pay attention to re-build this capacity, and we are going to do that, sir.

Well, I would be interested in also having you do an inventory of whether or not these agencies have really taken the human capital part of this into consideration. I am still hearing people tell me that when they lay off people or there is a little crunch, they get rid of those people first.

I mean, the whole goal that we had was to elevate this as something that is extremely important to the success of an organization. And it seems to me—and I will be asking this question 6 months from now, which is what is the evaluation of whether or not these folks are doing the job. I am sure that Ms. Lovelace is—

You are on the CHCO Council.

Ms. LOVELACE. Yes, I am.

Senator VOINOVICH. Sure. I bet you get her in a room and have her give you a little insight into what she has observed and to help ensure that CHCO Council becomes what we expect it to be, a forum where people are coming together, sharing ideas, and getting the job done. And it is important.

I mean, have you thought about who is going to be the quarterback over there for that? Have you given any consideration to that? I know you have a lot of things on your mind, but that is a pretty important role for someone.

Mr. BERRY. Well, sir, I am going to be the chair of that council. And like I said, I was the one who convened the meeting last week. And your suggestion is a good one. And Ms. Lovelace and I sat down and spent an hour and a half yesterday doing just what you were talking about, sir. So I am going to take it personally very seriously. So if there is a quarterback, you are looking at him, and I am going to be personally driving that.

Senator VOINOVICH. But what you need is some one to help you with that job like John Salamone, who worked with me at one time.

Mr. BERRY. Absolutely.

Senator VOINOVICH. And I think he tried very hard, but you know and I know that as OPM Director you have a lot of things on your plate. You have to have somebody that gets up early in the morning and goes to bed late at night, and really works and works and works and works, that comes to you, has a relationship with Peter Orszag and whoever is going to do the human capital thing over at OMB, to say, hey, this has got to get done.

Mr. BERRY. One of the things I was going to discuss next week with the CHCO Council at the May 12 meeting was whether that executive director, whether it should be a political or career person. I can see benefits and positives both ways, and I want to get the advice of the council on that before we make that call. I would have to say I lean career, but I want to get the benefit of everyone's input on that before we make a full decision on that and hire.

But you are right. There will be an executive director. We will be hiring that person and getting that, so they will be backing up that effort. But I did want you to know I will be personally taking it very seriously as well.

Senator VOINOVICH. Last but not least—this is a comment that I want to make—Ms. Duncan looks like she has got a pretty good operation.

Mr. BERRY. Yes.

Senator VOINOVICH. Best practice.

Mr. BERRY. I turned to Nancy Kichak here, and a couple of your ideas, Ms. Duncan, I said, "We have to do that."

Senator VOINOVICH. Bring her over for a couple of weeks.

Mr. BERRY. Ms. Kichak was taking good notes. We are going to be looking forward to emulating a lot of that and working some of those issues out, because we do not need to re-invent the wheel. If you have an automated program and it is working, I want to buy it. So we are going to be working on that, and I look forward to working with Ms. Duncan as well.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Voinovich. And now we will have the opening statement and questions from Senator Burris.

#### OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BURRIS

Senator BURRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Voinovich. I want to thank the panel for assisting us. I am a little bit green to the Senate, so I am going to ask some questions that may seem to be a little redundant, but it would also help me.

I had a friend that used to run the Department of Personnel, I think, but he never told me what he did. And I am just trying to make sure I understand the extent of your jurisdiction.

Now, do you actually do the hiring for the agencies or you recommend to the agencies' personnels that they can hire?

Mr. Berry.

Mr. BERRY. Yes. The Office of Personnel Management, sir, if you will, is responsible for the civil service and the regulations under which they operate. We are essentially the office of people. We are the people resource of the government, so we want to put in place good practices that protect merit principles, protect veterans' preference in hiring, which oftentimes those two things can—like Ms. Duncan was saying a pound here, a pound there.

Senator BURRIS. But you do not do the hiring.

Mr. BERRY. Other than for my own agency, no, sir.

So each agency, then, what we are charged with doing is working with the agencies to have in place policies and procedures and hiring practices that we have the responsibility—I can go in and audit them, and if Ms. Lovelace—for example, we come in and check

every agency no less than every 3 years. And if her practices do not protect the merit principles and the veterans' preference system, then, under the law, we can jerk her back into line. But, otherwise, we work with her and through the CHCO Council to make sure that those procedures are in place.

Senator BURRIS. So if someone were to send you a resume, Director, and they were interested in the Labor Department, would they send that resume to the Labor Department or would they send it to you at the Office of Personnel Management?

Mr. BERRY. They would come on to what is called USAJobs, sir. And they would go online, and then they would file that resume. And if they were to say they were interested in the Department of Labor, the Department of Labor has—the front-end system, if you will, OPM manages.

So the first contact is through us, and your resume is there. Labor has a back-end system, if you will, that is like a plug that connects into that, that says, OK, we are hiring somebody. Let us look at that resume of the person who is interested in Labor. But Labor would actually make the hire.

Senator BURRIS. My notes say there are 45,000 vacancies in the Federal agencies. Am I correct?

Mr. BERRY. Over the course of the year, there is on average—and this, obviously, goes up and down. But it is about 100,000 jobs a year, across the entire government come open in terms of the domestic agencies. Now, the Defense Department is——

Senator BURRIS. Is something else.

Mr. BERRY [continuing]. Is outside of that.

Senator BURRIS. Right.

Mr. BERRY. But the domestic agencies is about 100,000 openings a year. And when you look at that, about 30,000 of those positions—and if the staff would kick me if I am wrong or correct me for the record here. I think about 30,000 of those end up with veterans' preference programs, and engaging our veterans, and re-hiring our heroes and men and women who have served. And then about another 10,000 of those are intern conversions.

So that is where you end up, where you hear that number that is between 45,000 and 65,000, depending on how things are going, that the general public is open for competition. And those are the positions that you are thinking of that any American can come on to USAJobs and apply for.

Senator BURRIS. Now, are you seeing any spike in the applications to work for the Federal Government? All these high-powered MBAs and mortgage bankers, and Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) and lawyers are being fired in corporate America.

Are they looking to the Federal Government now for gainful employment?

Mr. BERRY. Senator, it is interesting. And I will let my colleagues here help me answer. But what we are finding is, obviously, certain jobs, you get a title wave of applications. Other jobs, you have a problem where, it is a very competitive industry.

For example, veterinarians right now, across the government, our veterinary schools are producing—there are more jobs and more demand than the students that are being produced, and so, we cannot fill the jobs. So that is where we have gone to special

tools, like direct hire authority, that we have let each agency now—if you find a vet and they are walking and breathing, hire them. And that is what we have done.

Senator BURRIS. What about the MBA or the lawyer who has got RIF'ed from the law firm?

Mr. BERRY. Well, now, they have to compete because right now, unfortunately, there is a surplus of those, and—

Senator BURRIS. Tell me about it. I am getting resumes in from everywhere, and I am trying to figure out what do I do with all these resumes as a senator, Mr. Chairman. People want to come work for the government.

I say, well, I know Director Berry. I am going to send them over there. [Laughter.]

Am I sending them to the wrong place?

Mr. BERRY. No, sir. You send them to us and USAJobs, and we will do our best to link them up. But it is also my job to make sure that—I have to protect the merit system.

Senator BURRIS. Oh, well, sure. You do not want to be violating any laws. No, you do not want to do that.

Mr. BERRY. Right. But we will make sure that if they apply, they are treated fairly and they are considered fully for the positions.

Senator BURRIS. Ms. Lovelace, now the Government Accountability Office (GAO) oversees the rules and regulations, or what is your role in all this?

Ms. LOVELACE. I am at the General Services Administration (GSA). And at GSA, I am the Chief Human Capital Officer. And so, I work very closely with Mr. Berry and OPM, making sure that we follow through on all the rules and regulations that they put in place, and utilize a lot of the tools that they provide to us to make sure we can bring the talent into GSA.

Senator BURRIS. You are looking for a bunch of people yourself, aren't you—

Ms. LOVELACE. Yes, sir.

Senator BURRIS [continuing]. With all of these requirements that the stimulus package has put on you, right?

Ms. LOVELACE. Yes, sir, we are. And we just posted quite a few vacancy announcements on USAJobs and GSAJobs, trying to recruit some of the talent we need to be able to do that.

Senator BURRIS. Well, maybe some of those MBAs and CPAs and lawyers can go on your Web site.

Ms. LOVELACE. We welcome them, sir.

Senator BURRIS. And is the civilian population of the Army seeing an influx of applications, Ms. Duncan?

Ms. DUNCAN. Yes, sir, we are. Normally, we are getting around 5,500 resumes per day. We are now up to 7,000 resumes per day. And each individual is applying for more positions. Usually, self-nominations were about 22,000 per day; they are up to 28,000 per day. So definitely, sir, yes, we are seeing an influx.

Senator BURRIS. And what would be the grade and level of most of these? Do you still use the GSA terminology?

Ms. DUNCAN. Well, sir, the Department of Defense also has the NPS system. But equivalent, of course, it is the full range of occupations that we have. But the majority of our vacancies are in the mid range.

Senator BURRIS. Well, I know you would have some preference to veterans, but do they get a special preference if they are an Army veteran?

Ms. DUNCAN. Oh, certainly. We follow the government rules for veterans' preference.

Senator BURRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pretty sure I will have some more questions.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Burriss.

We will move into the second round of questions here.

Mr. Berry, many private sector firms are gearing up for hiring under the Economic Recovery Act. Career Builder has put together a Web site devoted to stimulus hiring and even set up a virtual career fair schedule for May 19, 2009.

What initiatives does OPM have to prepare agencies for the Recovery Act hiring?

Mr. BERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

What we did right out of the box was that some of the critical areas that we have discussed today—especially the contract and acquisition specialist was one that we tried to get right because we knew, with this bill coming, there was going to be a lot of funds expended and a lot of contracts written up. And if you did not have professionals in place to do that, that was going to be an area of great vulnerability to the government. So why that streamlining effort was done first with that position description, it was forethinking, if you will, forward for this issue. And so, I think that has been helpful.

That has allowed, if you will, direct hire authority—just as I talk to you about the veterinary situation, for positions like this that are essential and critical, we have given each agency direct hire authority on the contract acquisition front. So that, right now, if somebody comes in, some of those MBAs and those lawyers that Senator Burriss was talking about, and they are qualified and know how to handle Federal regulations and contracting procedures, they can be hired immediately by the agencies and put to work.

So that is one of the first steps we have put in place, sir.

Second is we have been working through the CHCO Council to identify what other positions they need help on and what other positions are critical. GSA and I, for example—Ms. Lovelace just asked for some special authorities that would allow her to bring retirees back and allow them to be double paid for a period of time so that they could be re-engaged in some of these critical areas that she needs to do to handle these emergency funds that we have got to get obligated this year to help get this economy moving.

So we have approved those authorities for her, and we do that on an agency basis where that is needed. And so, we are going to be next week at the CHCO Council identifying what else we can do and how else we can make sure that agencies have what they need to get the people, that they can get those funds on the ground as the president wants.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Berry, the USAJOBS.com Web site is the most common way for agencies to announce Federal job vacancies and recruit candidates. This is a useful tool, but too many agencies stop right there. I believe that many agencies need to take a more proactive approach to recruitment.

What steps are you taking to encourage more proactive recruitment?

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, I think that is a great question, and it goes right to the point of one of the things I hope to be able to do, is to work with the Michigan and Ohio delegations on, for example, that job fair we were talking about with people from the auto industry who either have been laid off or are facing layoffs in the very near future, so that we can get job fairs on the ground and try to match—

Senator Burriss, just like you were saying, if there is an engineer who is getting laid off from Chrysler or from General Motors, and we have a shortage of engineers in the Federal Government right now, let's make that a marriage made in heaven and hire that person, and get them to work right away for the Federal Government.

So we are going to look at much more aggressive and creative recruitment approaches, sir, not just relying on a passive system. Although it is a great system, it needs to get better, and it will. And it needs to be more user friendly, and we need to do that. And it has got to be—I was interested in Ms. Duncan's idea about the interactivity, where you can follow and check on where your resume is and the status. The trouble we have is we have so many, it is hard sometimes to connect that up as accurately as we want to. And so, I am going to get with Ms. Duncan and figure out how we can do that better.

But those are just a few of the steps, Mr. Chairman, and I would defer to my colleagues for other good suggestions.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Berry, you testified about the importance of an essay to use the application process. I am encouraged by your work to make job announcements more clear and to simplify the applications process. As you know, however, many job announcements still are filed with confusing jargon and require lengthy knowledge, skills, and ability essays, which may deter candidates from even applying.

How are you addressing this problem, and do you believe legislation addressing these specific issues would be helpful?

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, I have to tell you a funny story. My first week on the job, I had a hearing on the House side, and I talked about this. I have to say, I mentioned when people were explaining the hiring process and a lot of the terminology that was used in it, after about 2 hours into the briefing, I said I felt like I had uncovered the lost language of Atlantis because it was so specifically written. I had to stop them almost every other word in the sentence and say, what does that term mean, what is that acronym?

I am little afraid to say that here I am now 4 weeks into the job, and I am starting to actually understand the language. It is dangerous. It is sucking me in. I am trying to keep distant enough from it, sir, so it does not overtake us.

But I used an analogy in a speech earlier this week that in our prairie grassland systems, oftentimes you need a fire, a controlled burn, to burn off the dead grass, and that is the only way that fresh grass can grow. We need a controlled burn through our regulations and through our building that will take out a lot of the dead wood, old language, and KSAs with it. And my hope is if we can



clear away a lot of that, and sufficient amounts of it, we are going to see some fresh growth there that is going to be in plain English, that Americans across our country can apply for jobs, know what they are applying for, match their resume to it, and have a fair shot at competing fairly for it.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Berry, our second panel person, Ms. Rix's written statement describes the benefits of using a structured questionnaire to simplify the application process and help applicants understand job requirements.

Is OPM encouraging more extensive use of structured questionnaires in place of essays?

Mr. BERRY. Yes, sir, as well as moving to the more resume approach. I mean, most Americans are used to applying for a job with a resume. And I think we need to be fair and careful. You know, I never use the same resume twice. When I was applying for jobs, you would always update it; you would tailor it to the job you were applying for.

So I do not want to mislead Americans and say—they are not going to serve themselves well if they just create one resume and use the same resume to apply for 20 different jobs. Hopefully, people are going to be smart just like they are with the private sector. They are going to tailor that resume to the position that they are applying for that allows them to come to the top. And they need to because, right now, in many of these positions, the popular positions, we are not getting just 10, 20, 30, or 100 resumes. We are getting thousands of resumes for positions, and weeding through those is quite an arduous task that we are wrestling with.

So we are going to work on that, Senator. I think the resume approach is the way to go. We hope to move to that more carefully and quickly over the course of this year, and I think you are going to see good results from it.

Senator AKAKA. On this question of streamlining jobs, Ms. Duncan and Ms. Lovelace, I would like to follow up with you.

What are your agencies doing to streamline job announcements?

Ms. DUNCAN. Sir, we certainly are looking at our job announcements, and we are looking at the system to update our automated system, where you go in and ask the applicant certain questions and streamline the process that way. In fact, we are going into a pilot test of it. We are starting the training this month. So even though we have a good system, there is always room for improvement, so we are constantly looking at that.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ms. Lovelace.

Ms. LOVELACE. I actually could answer in the same way. I happened to go on our Web site the other day to take a look at a couple of our vacancy announcements. The staff is certainly telling me that we have already streamlined some of them. And, yes, we have, but, clearly, I think we can do a lot more to streamline that process.

Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to add on to something that Mr. Berry talked about related to recovery. You asked him what was OPM doing. But I actually think OPM is doing a lot more than what he suggested to you. They have been working with agencies to be able to identify the recovery jobs on USAJOBS.gov. If you go on the site, you can actually see that it is a recovery job, it is clear-

ly identified that way, and I think that is going to help us fill our jobs quickly.

I also love the partnership that we have with them, that when we need a tool like dual compensation waivers for our re-employed annuitants, we are able to work with OPM to get those special authorities that we need, in fact, to help us fill those critical jobs.

As you know, we really do not have a lot of time to get all of our recovery work done, and so it is very important that we are able to hire skilled talent, not the people that are coming in that we have to train, but skilled talent that can come in and hit the ground running. And we think hiring re-employed annuitants is a really good way for us to be able to meet that change.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Ms. Lovelace. Senator Voinovich.

Senator VOINOVICH. I just wish I knew that everybody had a Gail Lovelace.

Ms. LOVELACE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator VOINOVICH. Obviously, you understand workforce flexibilities. We ought to grant them, I think, in some of these agencies to say, there they are, you can use them now, to eliminate some of the paper work.

You are in a strategic position. It is like somebody should be sitting back and saying we have all this going on out there, and then look at various agencies to see where you have some critical spots that we have had some difficulty, like the veterinarians.

I will give you an example of how this can work. Five or 6 years ago, I had the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) under my jurisdiction. I still oversee NRC as Ranking Member with Tom Carper. But anyhow, we anticipated that there was going to be a real need for people at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission because we knew that a lot of them were going to be retiring. We also understood that we would be getting some applications for nuclear reactors. For example, right now, we have 17 applications for 26 reactors. So they are not only going to have to do the job of re-licensing, they are also going to have to have the capacity to do the applications coming in.

So we got out and contacted Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Ohio State, and the University of Michigan. We even got money from the Department of Energy, I think it was \$15 or \$20 million, as seed money to keep students interested.

So I am just saying, as you look back and you say, well, we need more vets, the word should go out. We need the vets here, we need the vets there; maybe even look at some of the veterinarian schools—I mean, it is harder to get in the veterinarian school at Ohio State University than the medical school.

But I am just saying you have this wonderful opportunity, and I would think to look back and say, how do we really take advantage of this situation, and be very strategic? You are getting all these applications. Well, they ought to be prioritized. Hey, this is our shot, man. We can get some people that ordinarily maybe we might not be able to get. It is about the big picture.

Let's get into specifics. Security clearance. This issue has been on the high-risk list for a long time. Senator Akaka and I thought the Administration was going to do something. The Bush Administra-

tion said, you know what, we have looked at this thing and we have to start from scratch.

So they put in a lot of work, and you had some really good people that were on that. You had OPM, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), and General Clapper over at the Department of Defense. And it is my understanding that this clearance application was ready to be used at the end of December of last year, and now it is on "hold," pending further review by OPM.

I would like you to commit today that you can get back to us in 2 weeks, where we are with this. I am tired of it. I want this off the list before I leave the Senate.

Mr. BERRY. OK. Thank you, Senator.

I share your concern on it. I actually have a meeting with those gentlemen next week about this very issue, sir, and look forward to this. I was not aware that this was pending with us, Senator, so that is the first that I have heard that we are on hold on this. So I will get to the bottom of that, quite frankly, and get back to you.

I can tell you this. There has been some good news and some progress. And this is one where we have worked in close cooperation and partnership with the Department of Defense. There was a 3-year backlog in doing the investigations on folks and getting it over, and DOD transferred that function to OPM. And I have met with and been briefed by our Senior Executive Service (SES) who leads that, a woman named Kathy Dillaman. And she, God bless her, has done a pretty darn good job, and the Defense Department recognizes that.

We have worked through the 3-year backlog, and the average time line for every investigation right now is 90 days.

Senator VOINOVICH. Listen, I am aware of that. They have done a better job; we are making progress. But the thing that I am referring to is the revised clearance form. And according to my information, OPM is holding it up.

Mr. BERRY. Well, Senator, I will find out about that. Like I said, that is news to me. I have no letter pending from the Defense Department or CAA that has been brought to my attention in the 4 weeks I have been on the job, and no one has called me from those agencies. So I am a little blindsided here about that, sir. I will get to the bottom of it and find it out. But I can tell you I am meeting with both of those gentlemen at the White House next week, and I will get to the bottom of it.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

Ms. Duncan, do you use any third-party groups to recruit or do you do it all on your own?

Ms. DUNCAN. Sir, we, of course, partner with OPM. In terms of—are you referring to private agencies?

Senator VOINOVICH. Yes.

Ms. DUNCAN. I cannot say that it is never done out there because much recruitment of the volume that we do, it is possible. I am not aware of it, but I can certainly find out and submit that for the record.

Senator VOINOVICH. Have you looked at your budget in terms of the money you need for advertising and technology and things? Will it allow you to do the job that you need to do?

Mr. BERRY. Senator, that is something we are going—the budget came up today, and, obviously, that was kind of pretty much in the bag and in the box, if you will, when I walked in the door. So I did not have much of an opportunity to have much influence on that. I think we will have the flexibility, hopefully, to work with the Subcommittee, both here and with the Appropriations Committee.

We might need to move some things around to have that flexibility because I do not know—right now, it is an interesting thing. Thirty percent of our budget is controlled by direct appropriations and direct response to my tiller, if you will. Almost 65 to 70 percent of the budget is direct reimbursable as services to the agencies. And so, that somewhat responds to my tiller, but, as you can imagine, it also responds heavily to who is paying the bill.

Senator VOINOVICH. Well, I know this. The Administration has come in, and they have had to put a budget together. And probably the next budget will be the one that will reflect the real priorities of the Obama Administration—I know how that is; I have been through it.

But the thing that I want you to know is that Senator Akaka and I are very interested in giving you the resources that you need to get the job done—

Mr. BERRY. Well, thank you, Senator.

Senator VOINOVICH [continuing]. Now in appropriations. I just want to let you know that I would like to know what you need.

Mr. BERRY. Great.

Senator VOINOVICH. And I know you are going to have a certain muzzle on you because of the OMB, but the fact is that I do not want, a year from now, to have you come in and testify and say, I am sorry, but we do not have the resources to get the job done; and if you only did that, I would be in a better position to do what you want me to do.

I think we have a lot of that in a lot of other agencies here. I think we have short-circuited them. They have not paid enough attention, having the right people with the right knowledge. Too often, we are asking you to do a job, and we do not give you the people and we do not give you the resources to do your work.

So I really want to know about that, and I am sure Senator Akaka wants to know the same thing. And I would also like to get an answer to a question that I asked 10 years ago. What percentage of these department budgets are being used for training?

Mr. BERRY. Well, that is a great question, sir. And we will get back to you on the record on that.

Senator VOINOVICH. OK. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Senator Voinovich.

Mr. Berry, during your confirmation process, you said that you envision yourself as the “Recruiter in Chief” for the Federal Government. That is a big task and an important one. I understand OPM provides policy support to Federal agencies on recruitment, but does not have one office focused on government-wide recruitment and promoting the civil service.

What do you think about creating an office that focuses solely on Federal recruitment?

Mr. BERRY. Senator, one of the things I am looking at right now—and I was actually discussing with Ms. Lovelace yesterday and will be discussing more with my colleagues at OPM and through the CHCO Council—is our current organizational structure is not really functionally driven. It is not functionally based. And so, it is very hard to track exactly where the accountability, where the responsibility for those functions are.

So one of the things we are looking at, and we will look forward to be doing, is to try to create greater functionality in our organizational chart. I think that is going to be helpful not only for our own employees and our managers, but also for the CHCO Council. People need to know where to go, and there is no question that recruitment is going to be one of those key functional areas. So it has got to jump out at you, and it has got to be easy to reach, and it has got to be fully staffed.

I can promise you this. Part of the reform in this effort is not just on the hiring—I look at this as a two-sided coin we have to get right. We have to fix the hiring process, but, we at the same time, have to fix our recruitment process so it can be targeted, aggressive, enthusiastic; that we can use every approach that the private sector uses, from job fairs, targeted advertisement, being smart about how we can use some of these new technologies. Wouldn't it be great if a job announcement would fit on the Twitter system? And getting that word out there.

And so, we are going to do that. I look forward to coming back to you, sir, within the next year and, hopefully, having a much more functionally driven organization that will call out recruitment and do just what you identified, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. This will be my final question to the panel.

We have heard many recommendations and suggestions made to improve the recruitment process, and we will hear more from the second panel. I would like each of the witnesses to identify the top three recommendations that you believe would improve the recruitment efforts of Federal agencies.

Let me start with Ms. Duncan, Ms. Lovelace, and then Mr. Berry.

Ms. DUNCAN. Sir, I would go back to my previous analogy of gaining too much weight. We need to get the hiring process on a diet; we need to take off the things that we absolutely do not need; and we need to concentrate on what is really important, finding the best candidate for the job. And so, I would like to roll all three of those into one answer and say, we just need to get back to the basics.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Lovelace.

Ms. LOVELACE. I would like to see us actually engage management more early on in the process and really work on improving our workforce planning, and how that leads to them being able to accomplish their mission in a much more aggressive way.

I would also like to get back to the basics, as Ms. Duncan is talking about. And that is really why we have done lean hiring. When I think about the basics, I am looking at improving our Information Technology (IT) systems, our processes, our human capacity to do

all of this work, and to upscale our workforce. I am going to stick with those two.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Mr. Berry.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Chairman, I would have two as well. The first would be plain language, and I think we can do that. The second, it really comes directly from the President. And that is, we have to make government cool again. And I have become an old fogey myself. I turned 50 this year, and so I may not be the best person to talk to about “twittering” and a lot of the things that we need to be doing. So I am going to be smart enough to hire some young folks. And so, one of those wolf pack teams I have been talking to you about is going to be led by graduating students who are coming right out of their MBA/MPA programs right now.

I figure, if you want to stay cool, do not come to Ms. Lovelace and me for the ideas, although she is much younger. We have to go to the next generation. We have to leap frog and pick their brains for how we can make it cool, and how can we reach kids, and how can we connect up so that the next generation can answer the President’s call to come to the service of their country. We have to succeed in that, and we are going to leave no stone unturned in doing that.

So making it cool again, so that the next generation will fill the retirement wave, that when we (Ms. Lovelace, Ms. Duncan, and I) 30 years from now are ready to retire, there will be a next generation ready to fill those spots. And that is one of the things we are going to do, sir. So I would narrow it down to two for you: Plain language and being cool.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much, Mr. Berry, Ms. Duncan, and Ms. Lovelace, for your testimony as well as your responses to all of our questions. And I want to tell you, thank you very much for all your recommendations, and we look forward to working with you to improve our system. You have been very helpful to this Subcommittee, and I thank you very much for being here.

Mr. BERRY. Thank you.

Ms. LOVELACE. Thank you, sir.

Senator AKAKA. Our second panel will be Max Stier and Linda Rix. Mr. Stier is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Partnership for Public Service, and Ms. Rix is the Co-Chief Executive Officer of Avue Technologies Corporation.

It is a custom of this Subcommittee to swear all witnesses in, so I ask you to please rise and raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give this Subcommittee is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you, God?

Mr. STIER. I do.

Ms. RIX. I do.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much. Let the record note that the responses were in the affirmative.

I just want you to know that your full statements will be made a part of the record, and that your oral statements should be 5 minutes. Let me say again, welcome to both of you, and Mr. Stier will you please proceed with your statement?

**TESTIMONY OF MAX STIER,<sup>1</sup> PRESIDENT AND CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

Mr. STIER. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for inviting me here, and thank you for all the amazing work you have done for public service, including authoring the resolution establishing Public Service Recognition Week, recognition that the Congress has given, which I think is so important, and for speaking to the Service to America Medals finalists yesterday. You will note that you received a rousing ovation when it was mentioned that you are authoring a piece of legislation on fixing the hiring process. It is hitting a real chord.

There clearly is a huge opportunity here. We all know that. We are seeing a generational wave, the 1930s, 1960s, or 1970s, and now we estimate that there will be upwards of 600,000 jobs that will be filled in the next 4 years, the first term for President Obama. It is going to be setting the traces for dealing with today's problems, but also future problems.

There clearly needs to be a lot of things done, and I break them down into a couple of categories. One is the blocking and tackling, the very basic things. And we have talked a fair bit about the hiring process, or you have spoken about the hiring process, which is absolutely vital. Your legislation is terrific.

Again, I always think that there are things that can be done in addition to that. You touched on one of them, which was a question about a government-wide human capital plan. And I would like to have an opportunity, if it is possible, to talk further about responding to Mr. Berry.

Unfortunately, I think the time frame we have requires us to do everything at the same time because in the here and now, we face that massive wave. We cannot wait a year. And, frankly, as the director himself said, if you do not do your planning right, then you are shooting in the dark. You have to start there. And we do not have a government-wide plan.

Even Senator Voinovich talked about the need for nuclear engineers. In the testimony that Mr. Berry gave, he talked about acquisition professionals. You need to have full field of view. And single agencies looking at their needs is important, but the government has to operate as one corporate entity, and that requires somebody with a government-wide view—and that has not happened, and I think we lose a lot of opportunities as a result. So I would posit that is real important.

A second thing that would be dramatic would be requiring every agency to map their hiring process and make it public. I think that transparency would create an incentive for change in a very dramatic way. I bet you most agencies do not really know what their hiring process looks like, and I bet they would respond to changing it if they had to make it public. So one area for the blocking and tackling would be the hiring process.

Another would be student internships; again, very basic. The report that we put out, being generous, the government converts only 6 percent of its student interns into full-time employees. Army does 58 percent; that is terrific. That is a normal benchmark. You have

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Mr. Stier appears in the Appendix on page 58.

to be starting from the beginning, looking at student interns as a primary source of talent, and we do not do that right now.

Beyond the blocking and tackling, we need inspiration. And I would love to see you take the leadership role on the Roosevelt Scholars notion, which is scholarship for service. And the idea, really, is very straightforward, and that is the civilian ROTC. The military gets 40 percent of its officers from the ROTC program. We do not need to duplicate it at that scale on the civilian side, but it would be a way of truly re-branding government service by creating a civilian ROTC-like program.

I think that in all of this, we have to ask ourselves a question. Why haven't things changed already? Clearly, there is a lot of frustration, and I think that the question has to be addressed at the front end. And I think there are two primary reasons for this. One is that we do not have leadership commitment beyond the HR leadership in making sure that leaders and managers are focusing on these people issues. And the second is that we have a lack of transparency, a lack of information.

Senator Voinovich said, I have asked 10 years ago how much money agencies are spending on training. It is crazy not to know the answer to that question. We do not know the answers to a whole lot of things that would have an impact, including what the hiring process looks like.

Case in point. Between 2003 and 2007, I think DHS lost 75 percent—or 72 percent, almost three-quarters of its career SES. We do not know why. We should have been doing exit interviews. We should be doing exit interviews of our SES so we understand not only why they are leaving but what could be done better.

There are a lot of things we could do in the way of developing information that would create a dramatic difference, and I would be happy to talk about any of these issues further. But, again, I very much appreciate the leadership you have taken already and look forward to working with you. So thank you so much.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you very much for your testimony.

Ms. Rix, please proceed with your testimony.

**TESTIMONY OF LINDA E.B. RIX,<sup>1</sup> CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER, AVUE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION**

Ms. RIX. Thank you, Chairman Akaka. Thanks very much for asking us to appear here before this Subcommittee on this issue.

My name is Linda Rix, and I am the Co-Chief Executive Officer of Avue Technologies Corporation. We are a company that provides a technology platform that is Web based, and it is provided specifically to enable Federal managers and hiring managers, as well as HR professionals, a method to efficiently, economically, and effectively do hiring. We are part of a new media group.

We are where the rubber meets the road. We are actually where operating practices can be examined. We tend to focus a lot on data as opposed to anecdotes to determine if something is or is not working. One of the areas that may surprise you is for every human resource full-time equivalent (FTE) that exists in the Fed-

<sup>1</sup>The prepared statement of Ms. Rix appears in the Appendix on page 70.



eral Government at roughly an average labor rate of \$140,000 a year, that FTE will hire 12 people, 10 to 12 people per year.

So the hiring process does underscore, and the results of the hiring process underscore, the importance of the legislation you have proposed. I would say that even though we know that much can be done within the existing framework and within the existing administrative processes, that your legislation, and the key reason for it, will produce change.

Change is very difficult in the Federal Government sector. We have a lot of experience trying to get agencies to change various practices. And what we have learned from that is that if legislation is proposed, and if governing rules are developed around that legislation, that it gives permission for change to occur, which is one of the most important things that can happen here. So we believe in the Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act, and we think it is necessary, and we think it is timely.

I have a couple of things up here that I just want to point out to you with respect to new media in terms of economical capabilities to do successful recruiting. One of them is this chart over here,<sup>1</sup> and it may be a little bit confusing, but I just want to point out a key statistic.

When people go online to search for job opportunities, at that point, 97 percent of the searches are for specific jobs. Let's just take engineering since we have that theme. Those job searches are done through MSN, AOL, Yahoo!, and Google. Eighty percent of the applicants Avue sources for Federal Government agencies come from those four sources, and 10 percent or less come from USAJobs. So it is important to have an Internet presence.

The second chart that you are seeing there is our portal for the stimulus hiring that the U.S. Forest Service is doing, which is an Avue client.<sup>2</sup> That is a specific job portal designed just to recruit jobs for their stimulus hiring initiative. Not surprisingly, applicants prefer sites like this, that are tailored to their specific interests and their specific needs.

We are the technology solution that the Department of Defense has determined they will be using in the future. We have here two job portals, again, specific to procurement and acquisition personnel, and hiring of medical personnel. We are able to produce information on these job sites that takes a very long vacancy announcement and puts it into a form that is a very simple job summary. It looks just like this chart that you are seeing here. It focuses on a single screen image in which all the crucial information is provided.

So there is not a lot that has to be done that has not already been done. There are plenty of agencies that have great experiences with applicant involvement, with applicant relationship management. They also have great experiences with category rating, the use of alternative appointing authorities, and other types of flexibilities. That message needs to come out, but for other agencies to start adopting those practices, we really need your legislation, and

<sup>1</sup> The chart from Ms. Rix appears in the Appendix on page 73.

<sup>2</sup> The chart referred to appears in the Appendix on page 74.

we need you to do more along those lines because it is a crucial piece of this.

One other point that I think underscores this—and I want to get to it because of the common complaint that the Federal hiring process is daunting. What Avue has found is that 92 percent of the applicants that start the structured questionnaire will complete the questionnaire and submit an application. So it is a 92 percent retention rate. So that tells us a lot about the approach and how the approach can be used to improve retention.

We also are very good at putting information in front of managers at the time they are ready to recruit, information about their workforce planning goals, information about their underrepresentation, information that leads them to understand what kind of recruitment strategy they want to have take place.

Finally, we have agencies that use open continuous announcements, of which we are advocates. So instead of posting jobs individually, they are consistently recruiting on a broad basis all of the time for those positions. That takes recruitment down from months to hours. So a hiring manager can hire much more rapidly.

We think that you are doing the right thing. We think it could not be more timely. We really would hope that you would do more to help make it possible for agencies to adopt some of these innovations. Mahalo.

Senator AKAKA. All right. Mahalo.

Thank you very much for your testimonies. We continue to hear that agencies are not using the recruitment and hiring flexibilities. And you heard Senator Voinovich highlight flexibilities, such as student loan repayment and category rating, that Congress has provided to them. We have heard various reasons for why agencies are not using them, from budget limitations to lack of awareness.

You heard the first panel's response to this question. But my question to you is why do you think agencies are not using this range of recruitment and hiring flexibilities available to them?

Ms. RIX. I will take that.

There are approximately 165 different Federal Government hiring, appointing authorities. Each one has a complete set of regulations around it. In order for a human resources office to find the best avenue to hire people, that human resources office really does need state-of-the-art technology. It is impossible to implement the governing body of regulations.

One thing I think that is missing from this discussion that does need to be inserted into it, Federal Government hiring is done not just for the purpose of filling positions; there are also some public policy reasons. Veterans, for example, and the ability to hire veterans that are returning from war.

As a result of that, a lot of the policies that we have in place are designed to help with respect to those kinds of things. What we have done is we ask applicants through a structured questionnaire, a series of questions. And then when the hiring manager sees the list of candidates, that hiring manager can see all the possible ways that person can be hired. That person, not just all the possible ways a vacancy can be posted, but all the possible ways a person can be brought on board into the government, whether it is a

Veterans Readjustment Act (VRA), whether it is a returning Peace Corps volunteer, whatever possible flexibility.

There is one paradigm we have to overcome—and I am hoping, very hopeful, that your legislation will help with this. One paradigm we have to overcome is in the traditional HR world, HR specialists see their role as screening out applicants, not screening them in, and often, these regulations are used as a method to do that. So one thing that helps with that is being able to have the capability to apply all the rules against a particular applicant and say, this applicant can actually be hired this way. And that points to different appointing authorities and different hiring flexibilities.

I would suggest that it is only possible to do that, really, with robust technology. It would be very difficult to do that in a paper manual process or in some of the processes that Federal Government agencies use today.

Senator AKAKA. I'd like to follow-up on that. Many Federal agencies have limited resources to invest in recruitment programs. You testified about the value that technology systems can add to the recruitment process.

How much of an upfront investment do such systems require, and do you believe they ultimately are cost effective?

Ms. RIX. I believe that in traditional use of technology, it was cost prohibitive. In today's world, both with new media and the capability to economically reach millions and millions of people—every year, Avue processes millions and millions of applicants. Each applicant is treated as if they are a unique entity. They receive e-mails about their status. They have 24/7 capability to look up their status and look up where the hiring action is in the process. They get 72-hour notifications if they started to apply for a job but did not complete it and the announcement is closing.

All of that is done at a very inexpensive level because Avue offers its services on what is called a Software as a Service model. There are no capital investments. There is no need to buy hardware. There is no need for major capital investments like you would find in a very big major software deployment.

So we have approached it differently. The Internet gives you the broadest possible outreach. We have 1,600 .org and .edu sites on our recruitment sources library that automatically broadcast every Avue agency job announcement to all of those sites; 1,600 sites comprised of diversity groups, professional associations, colleges, universities. And it costs nothing. It does not even cost the cost of postage. So you have this capability to hit a very broad market, and at the same time be very specific in how you approach them.

So I would say to you that as technology has evolved, this process has become much more economically feasible.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Just to give you a chance at this, Mr. Stier, the first question I asked was what do you think about agencies not using the range of recruitment and hiring flexibilities available? Do you have any further comment on that?

Mr. STIER. Thank you, Senator, and absolutely. Look, I think you raised a couple of issues: Resources and information. I think the truth of the matter is, there are a bunch of different reasons why they do not do it. And I would think that the next question is what

can you do about it because there are a variety of reasons. And I would offer probably at least three possibilities of approaching this.

The first would be to ask the agencies, because one of the things we do not do enough of is ask the agencies themselves and to collect information from them, to ask them the question that was asked here, to prioritize what they need from Congress in order to be able to use these flexibilities.

I think a starting point is you have to really have the information about what flexibilities are being used, and it is spotty. You have some information on student loan repayment, but on a lot of the other flexibilities, we do not really know. And so, it would be quite interesting to actually inventory the flexibilities, find out who is using them, and to survey the folks, what their experience has been, why they are not using it if they are not, and what could be done to actually make it more useful for them. And I think that would be a pretty powerful driver to getting the answers that you need.

The other piece that I think is true, and I think this is writ large and it is not just about the flexibilities, is that these are issues that, again, are never given prioritization by the leadership in the agency. And at the end of the day, more often than not, you have the managers that are walled off from the HR hiring process. You have the leadership that does not pay attention to the talent issues. And as a result, I do not think you will ever get to the right answers unless you are able to get those leaders to care enough about it to invest in it. And people find solutions. They will find solutions if they think it is important. And we just have not had the push to make it important.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Stier, the Federal Government must attract and hire employees at all levels of experience. You testified about several barriers to successful governmental recruiting, which may undermine recruiting of young professionals and college students in particular.

In your view, what is the single most important change the Federal Government must make to attract young professionals?

Mr. STIER. To attract them, I think the most important change is for the government to become an active recruiter and to get more information out about the opportunities that are available to talented people that might attract them, to have people that are near peers, present the case for why it is that talented people should think about the government.

We released survey data from Gallup today that suggests that there is a much larger appetite for government service than there ever has been, a 16 percentage point jump and interest in government. I think that attracting them is real important. The hiring process is likely to turn an awful lot of them off. And then when they arrive and they are not vested in, they are going to be turned off even further.

Senator AKAKA. You discussed, Mr. Stier, the length of the hiring process as a recruitment barrier as well. As you know, our hiring bill would require an 80-day time frame.

Would that adequately address the problem, and is that an achievable time line?

Mr. STIER. It would not address it in and of itself because I think, for many folks, it is not just how long it takes, but it is what they know about where they are in the process. If you are applying to be a foreign service officer, and you know it is going to take 80 days, or 90 days, or 6 months, a lot of talent might wait. But if you do not know where you are, if it could be 6 months, or a year, or 2 months, then you are going to lose a lot of folks.

If it is a process that is so hard and so unrelated to what you expect is relevant to the job, you will also be turned off. And it will depend a little bit on the nature of the job, because for some talent, you might actually have folks that could wait longer than for other positions.

I think this is, again, something that we need to be careful not to have only one size fits all. I think 80 days is an outside limit. Again, the research suggests that most talent, when you are thinking about entry-level professional folks, do not want to wait more than 6 weeks, and that is two-thirds of the folks. So you need to push, I think, even better than that, but it would be an improvement in many circumstances if you could get it even down to 80 days.

Senator AKAKA. Thank you. Ms. Rix, I would like to hear your thoughts as well on how much of a problem slow Federal hiring is, and what should be done about that.

Ms. RIX. One of the things that the hiring process is often criticized about is the length of time it takes. I would suggest three things. One is that we have been able, with the use of open, continuous announcements and these types of specialized recruitment portals, to go from start to hire in 10 days. We have taken client agencies—I think the outlier was an average of 270 days to hire down to under 20. So it is possible to do that.

With the right capabilities, reaching applicants, keeping them informed of where they are in the hiring process, I would agree with Mr. Stier, is crucial. And the ability to constantly reach out to them and ask them, are you still available, are you still interested, we are still interested in you; and we have filled 10 jobs this week, and in the coming months we expect to fill another 50 jobs.

So what we ask them to do is click here and say, "Yes, I am still interested; keep my application active." And so, they are automatically considered as new opportunities come up. I think that is important to do because it does keep the interest level up.

The third is, I would like to see the bill somewhat strengthened with a requirement for the Office of Personnel Management, when they take this aggregated data about workforce planning and this idea of a single, comprehensive workforce plan, I think what is most important for OPM to do is set policy—and I am going to pick on the engineering example again for a second.

I think that it is true, not just in the State of Ohio but in many places, that you do have talented people that you want to bring in whose industries have been adversely impacted and whose skills are a critical shortage skill in the government today.

The engineering qualifications standard that is used is onerous, almost impossible to implement, and extremely difficult. It requires college education and training. Where an engineer may certify in the private sector without college education or training and still be

an engineer, that does not cross over into the Federal Government. It is an absolute impediment.

So I think that OPM needs to take these workforce plans, identify the critical occupations the government is going to be recruiting for, do a deep dive into the actual labor market conditions, how we can source these applicants and bring them over, how to qualify them through the assessment process so that they could be hired more easily and efficiently. And that requires some occupational studies, and that requires a great deal of effort.

Unfortunately, OPM's own workforce only has an HR population of 7.5 percent. That means that they are at a severe deficit in the capability to act on some of these initiatives. The organization needs to be strengthened. The appropriations side of the organization, which, as Mr. Berry said is 30 percent, has been operating at that capacity for over a decade. It needs to have a strengthened core HR professional workforce that can address some of these issues, or we will not be able to bring people across easily and efficiently.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Rix, OPM has developed the End-to-End Hiring Road Map that includes ways agencies can improve their recruitment efforts. You have heard OPM discuss some of their efforts on this front.

Does the End-to-End Hiring Road Map provide a good framework for the reforms you recommend or would you recommend re-thinking that road map?

Ms. RIX. That is an excellent question. I would recommend re-thinking the road map only from this standpoint. I love the road map. I think it shows a very substantive, thoughtful process that goes from workforce planning all the way to training and development. You take a person through that whole process, and you are likely to have a candidate that has high-retention capability, will stay with the government, and make the government a career, and we need that.

What I do not agree with, necessarily, relative to the road map, is the artificial constraint of trying to dictate that process. Often, OPM's best role is to set policy, provide leadership and vision, and set standards. When they get involved in pieces of the process, that is when we start to see them try to operationalize their strategy in a government agency that needs to have their strategy more closely linked with the agency's mission rather than a governing set of HR rules and regulations. Not to say that they are always in conflict, but it is not true that the U.S. Government is a single corporate entity. It is true that the U.S. Government is more representative of the Fortune 500 or, as I call it, the Fortune 134.

So when you look at the number of agencies, the uniqueness of their mission, that dictates the uniqueness of their recruitment strategy, their workforce planning needs, and their employee development needs. I would rather see a framework that I would urge that OPM be guided to; let agencies then work within that framework and set their own processes and procedures in place; adopt the technology solutions that make sense to them, and then move that forward.

I would say, one thing that is really missing is on the security side. We are in a situation where a lot of people are financially

stressed and a lot of people are unemployed. Those are two major deterrents to getting a security clearance in the government. So you have a compound, cascading effect of a bad economy where you have lost your job, and you potentially have incurred poor credit ratings as a result of that. And you cannot get a job with the government because its own security framework and policies is not in tune to realistically what is available in the labor market, and that needs to change.

Where OPM can best spend its time and invest in that time is not necessarily just in the new form and these other areas, but also, let's look realistically at whether we are applying the same security guidelines and protocols that we had in the 1960s to a workforce that is in the 2000s, and what can we do to change that?

Senator AKAKA. Thank you.

Mr. Stier, would you like to comment on OPM's End-to-End Hiring Road Map?

Mr. STIER. I think that, again, like Ms. Rix, I think it is a good effort, and I think it is an important effort to lay out. What I envision is it should not be a constraining process but should be a guiding process.

As your earlier question indicated, I actually think that agencies can do even better than that, but I think it is helpful, again, to have a framework that can be the source of at least guidance and conversation across government. I do think that the goals have to be even more aggressive than we have seen laid out there, but, once more, it is better than what exists, in many instances, for many Federal agencies.

You do have the opportunity, with examples like the Army Civilian Personnel System, where agencies are doing really great things. And that could be duplicated by other agencies, and I think that is something that, as Mr. Berry suggested he would do, ought to be explored.

Senator AKAKA. Mr. Stier, the Partnership for Public Service wrote a report in 2006 on the need for improvements in the government's HR workforce. This issue seems to be an underlying challenge to improving recruitment and hiring. I would like to hear your thoughts on how we can help improve the HR workforce.

Mr. STIER. Well, I think, again, Ms. Rix pointed out I think a very useful statistic about the size of the HR workforce at OPM. And that was a troubling statistic, and clearly, there is an opportunity to provide resources and direction that be increased.

It is clearly the case across government that you have seen a downsizing of that workforce at a time in which there are now increasing demands. And just like we are seeing at the Defense Department with a plus up of their acquisition workforce, I think we need to see a plus up of the HR workforce across government. That means more resources and more investment in people, and in the training of people. Because one of the things that I think is missing is not just the head count, but the investment in providing the skills training that the existing HR workforce needs and that the new folks are going to need to be able to keep up and to excel.

So this is a problem again writ large. It is more pronounced in the HR workforce, but we need to see a heavier investment in training and development, particularly around the HR function.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Rix, you testified that outsourcing HR functions can lead to a disconnect between HR contractors and hiring managers. I would like to hear more about how HR should interact with hiring managers and what value this adds to recruitment.

Ms. RIX. One of the things that we have discovered over time, the HR workforce in the Federal Government sector has been effectively depleted. I believe there are fewer than 4 percent of the HR professionals that are under the age of 30, and the vast majority are retirement eligible. So backfilling and hiring, or even growing the size of that workforce to meet the impending retirement tsunami, as well as things like stimulus hiring and aggressive insourcing efforts, that workforce needs to grow and grow substantially.

The method that agencies have used has been to contract out the work to private contractors, who are not knowledgeable about the Federal hiring system, do not have real expertise, and often end up displacing the Federal HR workforce by taking a seat with management instead of having the Federal Government employees at the table with management. The net effect of this is a cost of operation that is two and a half to five times greater than it would be if it were done by Federal employees.

So when you look at this, that is one focus I would encourage you to look at. Insourcing Federal HR jobs is crucial. It is inherently governmental. It is working side by side with management to manage the workforce more effectively and to be able to promote the needs of management through the operations in HR that deal with recruitment, staffing, labor relations, employee relations, and all of those other activities.

I would also say that one thing that I would encourage Mr. Berry to do is to look at that 70 percent that he discussed that was fee for service based. That 70 percent of funding is going through OPM, but it is going to contractors. It is not work that OPM employees are doing; it is work that contractors are doing by virtue of a contract vehicle through OPM.

This worsens the case because now OPM is not necessarily inspired to build its own workforce up to be able to provide the guidance and the leadership and the proper standards and policies that Federal agencies need right now. So I encourage this Subcommittee to examine that particular issue and to know that it does have an extreme adverse impact on the agility of the government when we do need to act quickly, as in the case of the stimulus hiring.

Senator AKAKA. Well, I must tell you, your responses have been good and very helpful. Let me ask the last question, and this opens it up. I have been specifically asking you about some things. I would now like to give you the opportunity to provide any additional thoughts, or recommendations you may have on the hearing today.

As you know, the hearing is, as we had it announced, Uncle Sam Wants You!: Recruitment in the Federal Government. So my question is what are your additional thoughts or recommendations that you may have on this?

Mr. Stier.

Mr. STIER. Well, first of all, thank you very much, again, for listening and for soliciting the input, and for the great leadership



that you have exhibited in this arena because it is so important. You have heard an awful lot of stuff here, and there is more than could possibly be done given all the recommendations here.

I would point out in listening to the first panel, that at least two of them for the agencies mentioned their rankings for the Best Places to Work. And, obviously, the Partnership Act does that. But what was instructive to me is that it helped generate a motivation on their part, that they were being ranked on the basis of what their people and their agency had to say about them. And I think, to me, that is a place where you can continue to push; that if you can actually provide more transparency and more information, that incentivizes the kind of behaviors that you want in these agencies.

One very easy example of that is that at the present time, the basis of the Best Places to Work rankings is the Federal Human Capital Survey, which is conducted by OPM every other year. Well, it would be great if OPM actually did it every year because then you would have a more frequent basis of understanding where these agencies are from their employees' perspective, and to help get that information out faster because right now the lag time is about 4 or 5 months.

So, again, the broader concept is to do more to make these processes transparent by getting more information out. And, specifically, we would love to see the Federal Human Capital Survey done annually and the results put out very frequently, or rather in a more timely fashion. But, again, thank you for everything you have done, and we hope that we can be helpful in any way you can direct us. So thank you.

Senator AKAKA. Ms. Rix, any additional thoughts?

Ms. RIX. Just, really, one, which would be to try to encourage government agencies to capture the total workforce all inclusive. So we would look at capturing data on the civilian workforce, the military workforce, and the contractor workforce that is supporting those organizations.

We believe right now—this is a very difficult estimate to get. You have to go to a lot of sources of data. But we believe there is a backlog between 200,000 and 380,000 funded vacant positions in the government today. A lot of that has been produced by the time lag in being able to fill positions, but most of it is produced by the fact that agencies often do not have good tracking systems to know that they have a funded vacancy.

So when you are trying to manage the workforce, and do your workforce planning, and these other things, it is crucial to be able to know what is my vacancy rate and what should I be focusing on in terms of recruitment from a broader perspective.

The second is, with only 1.8 or 1.9 million Federal employees and a contractor workforce of 10.5 million employees, you have a sizable management problem if you do not have visibility on the 10.5 million; plus, you are not sure exactly how to move quickly when you need to pull them back into the Federal workforce as opposed to releasing them out to contractors.

So I would encourage this Subcommittee to take a look at a contractor inventory by every agency so we could see the actual size of government and be able to look at how interchangeable are those jobs, and whether or not we have things out that are critical to

managing the organization that ought to be brought back in to the government sector.

I would echo Mr. Stier's words. I really appreciate all the work that you do. I know that you have been working consistently and tirelessly with Senator Voinovich on a number of Federal workforce management issues. It is so important. I think your staffs are working tirelessly as well. And we really appreciate the opportunity to be here, to have you listen to us, and to know that there are sources of data and information that can provide you good visibility on things as simple as how frequently does category rating get used. So thank you so much.

Senator AKAKA. Well, again, thank you very much for your responses. You have been very helpful to us. And, without question, together we can deal with the challenges that we have ahead of us; I look forward to that. Again, thank you for your input here and your recommendations, and wish you well in what you do.

Mr. STIER. Thank you.

Ms. RIX. Thank you.

Senator AKAKA. This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:38 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

# A P P E N D I X

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STATEMENT OF

JOHN BERRY, DIRECTOR  
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE  
FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

UNITED STATES SENATE

on

RECRUITMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

MAY 7, 2009

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to share with you my commitment, as the recently confirmed Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), to create a dynamic and responsive recruiting strategy and hiring process. During Public Service Recognition Week, as we recognize the outstanding contributions made by Federal employees, we need to also be mindful of the challenges that we face as a Federal Government in recruiting the next generation of employees who will continue to make this Nation strong. As the Director of OPM, I am convinced there is no other priority more important than making the Federal recruiting and hiring process as transparent, efficient, effective, and user-friendly as possible, from the perspective of both job applicants and the Federal agencies that need these critical skills in order to accomplish their missions.

In my short time as OPM Director, I have learned a lot about what OPM has done to move Federal hiring into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In concert with several agencies, two of which sit with me here today, we have developed several initiatives that were designed to improve Federal recruitment and hiring. What concerns me, though, is that while these initiatives have received good press and are supported at the highest levels within the human resources community, they have unfortunately not permeated throughout the Federal agencies, or, more importantly, become a standard way of operating. Even within my own agency, I find that sound human resources management practices have not taken hold.

This optional, voluntary approach to driving innovative and bold changes to human resources management is not working. If we are going to make any real progress toward addressing what the American public has requested—an easy-to-use application process that both Federal managers and applicants deserve and a recruiting and hiring process that brings the right talent to the mission – we must engage in an aggressive campaign to mandate the needed innovations. I believe both of you, Senators Akaka and Voinovich, have introduced legislation on this topic and we look forward to reviewing it.

To show you how seriously we have taken your challenge this past year for OPM to take on a leadership role in recruitment and hiring, I want to take the next few minutes to update you on some of our more significant and successful ventures.

- OPM, in collaboration with the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), introduced the idea of working as one Federal Government to recruit and hire contract specialists at the entry level. Representatives from the acquisition community, several agencies, and OPM human resources professionals worked together to tackle recruiting and hiring on three fronts:
  - branding and marketing by creating a recruiting Web page that is both informative and interactive;
  - streamlining the application process by trimming job announcements by over 75 percent, writing them in plain language, eliminating written essay-style questions, and simplifying the assessment process so that it takes approximately 15 minutes to complete; and
  - using a centralized hiring approach where appropriate, which offers participating agencies the opportunity to share talent across the Federal Government. Building on this successful venture, at the request of FAI, and in support of the Nation’s economic recovery, OPM has developed and provided to all agencies a complete suite of tools for the agencies to use in recruiting and hiring acquisition professionals at the mid-career level.
  
- OPM has streamlined job announcements for more than 20 mission-critical and heavily recruited occupations, taking care to again use plain language and remove the requirement for written essay-style questions about the applicant’s knowledge, skills, and abilities (“KSAs”). Some of these job announcements include accountants, auditors, grants management specialists, human resources specialists, patent and trademark examiners, investigators and information technology specialists. Another important improvement was to ensure these announcements focused more generally on applicants’ experience rather than just their *Federal* employment history so that we can attract applicants more broadly from all sectors of society. We cannot continue to rob each other of our talent. We must design tools that seek out and hire talent from all sources. This is the only way we will hire the right people in the right Federal jobs and provide opportunities to Americans, especially in this time of economic need.

Building on some of the initiatives described earlier, and keeping in mind the heightened interest in Federal employment that our current economic challenges have generated, we also are reaching out to those agencies – such as the Army Corps of Engineers and the Defense Contract Management Agency where there is an identified need to fill mission-critical occupations and a recognition that some of these same occupations exist in downsizing industries, such as the automotive industry. Our offer to these agencies is to conduct hiring fairs in Detroit this summer, where we make use of the tools already developed and we pull together as one Federal Government to provide employment opportunities to those with much-needed skills, such as engineers, quality assurance representatives, and contract specialists. Gone are the days of thinking only about how to steal talent from other Federal agencies, and the belief that only those who understand our Federal laws and rules are capable. My challenge to all agencies, mine included, is to seek out opportunities that drive real change in how we recruit and hire. Pulling these three agencies together, albeit with different missions, is an example of how far we can go to not only change the face of human resources management, but also to employ our fellow Americans.

- OPM's Hiring Process Analysis Tool is another example where OPM has provided support to agencies in improving their lengthy and burdensome hiring processes. The Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA), made excellent use of our tool in streamlining their process. They combined our tool with hands-on work interviewing staff members and developing detailed process maps to push forward needed changes. The map consisted of 114 discrete steps, and more than 45 hand-offs between managers, administrative officers, and human resources specialists. The Department has worked to streamline its process.
- Finally, I'd like to introduce my ideas on student hiring. While the numbers are not as dire as some would have you believe, we nonetheless need to do a better job of developing the future Federal workforce. One of our key initiatives that will take place this June is to pull academic leaders together, from the vocational technical level in high schools to the community colleges and universities, and discuss with them our current and future mission-critical occupations, both professional and skilled labor. We need to ensure the academic world clearly understands our needs and helps us build the pipeline of needed knowledge and skills. The answer is not always to create yet another hiring authority. In many cases, it is through good workforce planning, pipeline building, and targeted recruitment that we can overcome some of our most severe shortages. Once we get these talented students on board, we then have an obligation to nurture them through hands-on mentoring programs and paying close attention to their needs and concerns.

As I said previously, I am completely committed to tackling these challenges, both within my own agency and across the Federal Government. I have put together a "tiger team" of

some of our talented human resources professionals to think through and introduce innovative and bold changes to the Federal Government's recruiting strategies and hiring processes. I am convinced we can make bold changes. Some are relatively simple administrative changes, such as writing job announcements in plain language, while others may require legislative changes. But we cannot and will not succeed unless and until we start holding ourselves accountable for changing. Volunteering to change is simply not working. I am, however, very cognizant of the fact that we must first provide products and services that we have reason to believe will work before we cross the line into mandating the changes. Nonetheless, if we don't step off the curb, we will never begin the journey. Change is difficult—I get that. What we can't do, though, is continue to say "we've done enough, and all is fine," when we know it is not and we know we must move forward if we are going to "fix the hiring" once and for all.

There is one more thing I would like to address and that I think is a very important point for me to end this testimony with. No matter what changes we make to recruiting and hiring, we must always ensure that the basic principles of our merit-based system and veterans' preference remain intact. I am absolutely convinced that weakening the merit system is not the answer. As I have said before, not only is it appropriate for the Federal Government, as one of the world's largest employers, to stand up for the principles that ensure fair and open competition and provide our veterans with a chance to further serve their country, but it would be irresponsible of us to do anything less.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to be here today. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

STATEMENT BY

DR. SUSAN L. DUNCAN  
ASSISTANT G-1 FOR CIVILIAN PERSONNEL  
UNITED STATES ARMY

BEFORE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
FIRST SESSION, 111<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
MAY 7, 2009

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE

**Introduction**

Senator Akaka, Senator Voinovich, Distinguished Members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the Civilian Personnel of our Army. Army Civilians provide vital support to Soldiers and Families in this era of persistent conflict. They share full responsibility for mission accomplishment by delivering combat support and combat service support – at home, abroad, and on the battlefield. More than ever, Army Civilians are an absolutely essential component of readiness.

Today, the Army's Civilian Corps is over 287,000 strong with 5,600 currently serving in harm's way in the U.S. Central Command area of operations. My testimony today provides you my assessment of the challenges facing the Army Civilian Corps, the Human Capital Strategy and supporting actions the Army will undertake in the coming years to address these challenges. I will share some key data that reflects the scope of our recruitment challenges as well as some key performance metrics. Most importantly, I will share initiatives that the Army has taken to invigorate its outreach recruitment efforts for the civilian talent it requires.

**Strategic Challenges**

The Army's Civilian Human Resources (HR) community is challenged to meet the Army's increasing civilian labor requirements. Our strategic planning tools and means of approaching ensure that our efforts are grounded on factual information, mission requirements and cognizance of external environment influencers like the economy, employment trends, and the civilian labor force (CLF). A number of mission critical occupations are impacted by shortfalls in the civilian labor market. These occupations include Civil Engineers, Electronic Engineers, Environmental Engineers, Geologists, Statisticians, Education Services, Transportation Specialists, Environmental Protection Specialist, and IT Specialists. Based on our assessments we continue to develop and improve our human capital strategic planning efforts to stay ahead of the any potential shortfalls.

In 2008, the Department of Army Civilian HR professionals filled over 122,000 recruit actions; 48,000 of which were external hires new to the Army Civilian Workforce. To fill these positions, the Army opened 81,620 vacancy announcements. Almost 6.2 million applications were submitted and processed.



This represents an average of 64 applications per vacancy. While there is rarely a vacancy that does not attract some applicants, there are critical hard-to-fill-jobs for which traditional recruiting methodologies do not produce a sufficient number of well-qualified candidates. On the other end of the spectrum a vacancy announcement at one Army installation generated 2,634 applicants. The problem is how to focus on reducing the number of applicants to a list of the best qualified applicants using job-related criteria.

While we have been successful in growing the Army's civilian workforce over the last few years, we will significantly stress our capacity to meet known and projected hiring initiatives over the next few years. The Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) of 2005 will require the movement of over 23,000 positions to different geographical areas. Our analysis of past BRAC actions indicates that traditionally only 30% of the current work force will move with their current organization. This projection may move upward based upon today's economy. We project that over 56,000 additional BRAC recruitment actions must be filled between now and the end of fiscal year (FY) 2011 to provide Commanders the talent needed to meet critical missions. This is on top of the 120,000 actions needed to sustain current operations. The Army projects hiring up to 4,000 employees as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and a significant number of new civilians as part of current in-sourcing initiatives.

#### **Strategic Recruitment Planning Efforts**

Our analytic and forecasting capabilities, as well as our approach to workforce planning, has helped the Army join the ranks as one of the best places to work in the federal government for 2007. This 2007 ranking was determined by the Partnership for Public Service and American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation. We are aggressively working to improve our human capital strategic planning capability and infuse our human capital initiatives with workforce analytics. Examples include our data warehouses which provide decades of data on key personnel attributes, demographics and transactions the Army uses to conduct trend analysis and track occupational changes across the Civilian Corps enterprise as well as by organizational unit. We regularly project approaching retirements and hiring needs with a significant degree of precision; these projections help target recruitment needs and serve as the basis for allocation of centrally-funded intern positions. Our occupational

hiring levels are tracked against the projected recruitment needs making adjustments as required. The Army's civilian occupational requirements are also evaluated against high demand occupations in the Civilian Labor Force so that we can develop future recruitment strategies ahead of potential shortages

Army civilian voluntary retirements are projected to remain stable for the next five to six years. Depending on economic trends we may face significant retirements beginning in FY15 as the number of retirement eligible employees under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) begins to increase. As this eligible population reaches the retirement window, the Army faces a contraction of the number of 33-45 year old workers in the civilian labor force which is a key target group of recruitment for the Army. The number of retirements of employees under FERS is more dependent on the performance of financial markets as this is a key component of employees' retired income. To date, we have not observed any notable differences in retirement patterns based on the current economic conditions although the housing market and unemployment levels have affected current employee's mobility, attrition, and the number of applicants. We will continue to closely track these patterns and determine appropriate strategies to mitigate any emerging challenges.

#### **Recruitment Processes and Automated Staffing Tools**

The Army civilian workforce relies on automated tools and technology to manage our hiring processes. We adopted a single resume format that can be used for any vacancy within the Army civilian workforce and their resume is on file, it is easy to self-nominate for any vacancy. We are exploring options today that will more specifically target candidate pools and data mine existing resume repositories to identify potential candidates that possess the competencies we need. While applicants are required to use a web-based resume builder to apply for positions, Army provides them real time access to an automated system that gives them the status of every position for which they have applied. They know when their application has been received and processed, whether they have been determined qualified and/or eligible, and whether they were referred to the selecting official. They are also able to quickly learn when a selection has been made. At any stage in the process, they are provided access to HR staff via an automated help desk that can address their questions regarding decisions that have been made in regards to their application.

It is often challenging for the HR professional to adequately use automated staffing tools/technology to identify from the candidates' resumes who are the best qualified. Often the HR specialist must manually intervene to ensure criteria used to rank applicants do not inadvertently filter out well qualified candidates, or conversely, put applicants on the referral list who do not meet the hiring official's requirements. This manual intervention can affect the length of time it issues a referral list and impact applicant's perceptions of the transparency of the process. In addition, the Army's civilian workforce is continuing to increase in the professional and administrative occupations requiring more skilled candidates in fields such as medical and acquisitions with mid-level experience which require more screening than unskilled labor.

Currently, the Army and other Department of Defense (DoD) services are working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and vendors to pilot a replacement automated staffing tool that will meet the needs of the Army civilian workforce. We anticipate initiating a pilot of a new application soon to determine if we can improve the applicant experience, the quality of referral lists and streamline the current processes. In this regard, we have used the OPM model to establish an end-to-end hiring process that will satisfy customer expectations and mission demands.

#### **Recruitment Strategies, Authorities, and Outreach Efforts**

The Army regularly uses nine direct hire authorities to expedite hiring. For example, we utilize these authorities in 24 health care occupations, and in 5 engineer occupations that support recovery efforts in New Orleans from Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. We also use this tool for 82 medical positions to support Walter Reed's mission to care for our Nation's Wounded Warriors. We have also begun to use the Department of Defense Expedited Hiring Authority for Acquisition Positions. The Army believes this tool will be used extensively to fill our mid and senior level contracting positions.

The Army has also aggressively recruited for mental health care professionals and doctors, nurses, clinical psychologists and clinical social workers. Since March 2009, we participated in 11 jobs fairs in Baltimore, Md.; Los Angeles, Calif.; San Antonio, Texas; Chicago, Ill.; Columbus, Ohio; Houston, Texas; New Orleans, La.; and New York City, N.Y.. Our recruitment efforts have resulted in 441 new employees to the Army.

Recruitment efforts for entry level positions are generally not problematic. We successfully used the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP) appointing authority and Student Career Experience Program to hire new workers to fill gaps in our mission critical occupations. As of December 2008, there were 4,088 employees under the Federal Career Intern Program. We have 1,728 centrally funded interns and project hiring 1,088 more this fiscal year. In addition, since 2001, Army made 4,907 Student Career Experience Program appointments and converted 58.7% of those students to permanent civil service positions. Agency managers at all levels are restructuring vacant positions and filling them at developmental levels.

To address hiring needs associated with the BRAC 2005 actions, a partnership between the Army and the local community was established in Fort Knox, Ky. Community representatives from nine counties in central Kentucky are promoting private sector involvement in the workforce investment system and serve as an advisory body to local education and training providers. The Fort Knox Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) and the local community collaborated early to help the region respond to growth opportunities. The parties collaborated to conduct a comprehensive workforce study that was used to educate the local community, employers, educators and Federal leaders in recruitment and outplacement activities. Federal hiring symposiums in the spring and summer of 2008 resulted in more than 1,000 potential job seekers. A community effort was launched to inform college students of future Army employment opportunities at Fort Knox. An aggressive publicity campaign as well as a recruitment video resulted in outreach to more than 1,200 students on 17 campuses.

A major recruitment effort at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. in February 2009 resulted in over 2,500 job applicants for the Army's Communications-Electronics Lifecycle Management Command and Team Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance. The event focused on recruiting mid to senior level job candidates for the participating organizations. The job fair was held in partnership with the Harford Community College, Susquehanna Workforce Network, and Harford County's Economic Development. It was successful due to the large number of attendees and the professional processes used to both educate and manage the vast

number of attendees. The command anticipates having 300 of these applicants added by the end of July 2009.

In April 2009, Fort Riley, Kansas held its second Hiring Heroes Career Fair. More than 400 Wounded Warriors, their spouses, and family members who serve as care providers, local active duty soldiers, veterans, and their spouses attended this well publicized event. Seventy-eight private industry and DoD vendors participated. During the six-hour event, 299 interviews were conducted and 24 Army civilian personnel job offers were extended throughout the day. Seventy-nine potential additional job offers were reported by vendors via exit surveys.

The U.S. Army Medical Command conducted a series of recent job fairs and outreach efforts to attract candidates for physician, nurses, and mental health professionals. Fairs conducted in April 2009 include: National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, San Antonio, Texas; Nurse Week Career Fair, Seattle, Wash.; Society for Social Work Leadership and Healthcare, New Orleans, La.; American Society of Addiction Medicine, New Orleans, La.

These job fairs and recruiting efforts are just a few examples of hundreds of similar events conducted across the Army. At the command and activity level, managers, with the support of the HR professionals, are investing in more effective targeted recruitment strategies to fill the ranks of their organizations. In many cases, the traditional practice of passively posting vacancy announcements does not work. The conduct of targeted recruitment and job fairs is an investment in time and resources that managers have gradually accepted as necessary. We continue to aggressively work with DOD and OPM to provide managers the tools and authorities needed to effectively compete in local, regional or national labor markets.

In 2008, Army spent \$21.5M on civilian recruitment incentives, \$13.7M on relocation incentives and approximately \$15.M on retention incentives. This \$50.2M investment was primarily used to attract and retain engineers, medical professionals, and research scientists. The authority to repay student loans is becoming more widely used by managers to attract the civilian talent they need in critical mission occupations. Since 2001, the Army has disbursed \$11M to repay student loans for our civilian employees. In 2008, the total disbursement for this program was \$4.2M, indicating that its use is accelerating.

We are partnering with DoD, OPM, and the Partnership for Public Service to establish a pipeline for employees of companies downsized in the current recession to access Army and DoD vacancies which match their career fields. In partnership with our military recruiters, we are also including material on civilian employment to promote a continuum of service with the Army and include outreach to candidates that may not meet the requirements for military service but are highly qualified to serve in civilian opportunities.

In 2007, the Army proposed a new noncompetitive appointment authority for the spouses of military members who were killed or totally disabled in the line of duty. These military spouses are being called upon to be the chief source of income for their families, but without current federal employment status, have no entry to federal jobs absent the current competitive examination process. This initiative resulted in the Publication of Executive Order (EO) 13473, signed on September 25, 2008 by the President.

The Army's Wounded Warrior Program works with the Army's Civilian HR professionals to match severely wounded, medically retired soldiers for Army civilian job vacancies to match the wounded warrior's job skills and geographic preferences. The Army has employed over 100 wounded warriors and over 700 are employed across the Federal Government.

To take full advantage of our civilian workforce's potential, the Army continues to work with OSD to refine and eventually implement a comprehensive civilian competency management system (CMS). The CMS will establish competency-based career paths and guides for use by supervisors and employees in determining training and developmental needs for individual career planning.

Hiring new employees is only one component of the human resources life cycle management process. The Army is making significant investments into leader development initiatives at all grade levels to provide employees the competencies they need to be successful.

The Army recognizes that it must invest in its civilian human resources community. In the last year, several hundred new HR professionals were hired to meet expanding workload requirements and to fill the void created by retirements and voluntary losses.

The civilian human resource community is effectively partnering with the Army's Accessions Command and Human Resources Command to leverage the capabilities of that network in marketing civilian job opportunities to provide veterans who leave the Army information on how to apply for civilian positions and utilize their veteran's preference. Currently 48% of new civilian Army hires are former military.

**Summary**

Army leaders at all levels recognize the strategic value of human capital planning and view civilians as strategic investments. We have improved our recruitment of qualified talent and much more is underway. We have human capital data that spans decades and are improving our capability to utilize it more effectively in the overall management of the Army and will continue to aggressively expand our outreach and recruiting programs.

The Army considers the Department of Defense, its sister services and the Office of Personnel Management key strategic partners and we engage on a daily basis to address recruitment challenges.

We employ a dedicated cadre of civilian human resource professionals, which like much of the Army's uniform workforce, is stressed by the significant demands placed on them the last few years. These dedicated public servants understand the importance of the work and continue to deliver impressive measurable results. We are committed to continual improvement of our existing processes for managers, employees and applicants.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you here today. I look forward to addressing your questions and concerns.

**GAIL T. LOVELACE**  
**CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICER**  
**GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT**  
**MANAGEMENT, THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE**  
**AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**OF THE**  
**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**  
**AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**  
**MAY 7, 2009**





Good afternoon, Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Voinovich, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the General Services Administration (GSA). My name is Gail Lovelace and I serve as GSA's Chief Human Capital Officer. I am especially honored to be here with you today to discuss recruitment and retention of a talented Federal workforce during Public Service Recognition week.

GSA provides a centralized delivery system of products and services to the Federal Government, leveraging its enormous buying power to get the best value for taxpayers. Established in 1949, GSA manages more than one-fourth of the Government's total procurement dollars and influences the management of \$500 billion in Federal assets, including 8,600 Government-owned or leased buildings and 213,000 vehicles. GSA helps preserve our past and define our future, as a steward of more than 480 historic properties, and as manager of USA.gov, the official portal to Federal Government information and services. GSA's mission to provide superior workplaces, expert technology solutions, acquisition services, purchasing and E-Gov travel solutions and management policies, at best value, allows Federal agencies to focus on their core missions.

During the 1970's, over 40,000 employees worked at GSA. Today, we are an organization of 12,000 that relies on a highly competent workforce to accomplish its mission. Our continued ranking as one of the "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" shows that we have placed high emphasis on workforce engagement and this has contributed to GSA's ability to be in a better position not only to attract but to retain talent. The Best Places to Work rankings are produced by the Partnership for Public Service and American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation based on agency results from the Federal Human Capital Survey.

Recently, there has been a good deal of concern about hiring in the Federal Government. Why does the hiring process take so long? Why do applicants rarely hear from agencies where they have applied? From the perspective of managers and applicants the process is too slow. When the process is slow – the reasons can come from multiple sources. For example, managers who may not devote the time to developing selection criteria or interviewing, or the selectee may delay filling out security paperwork, or the Human Resources (HR) organizations are handling an enormous volume of applications with fewer resources and with information technology (IT) systems that are not fully supporting their business. Whatever the reason -- we need to break this cycle and improve the hiring process across the Government. It will take improvements on the part of HR professionals, managers, and those interested in working in the Federal Government.

Even in this environment, GSA has been able to attract top talent. We have taken a number of steps to enhance recruitment efforts so that we are positioned to bring the best and the brightest to work at our agency. While we have made

progress in some areas, we continue to face challenges in others and we need to do more. I would like to outline for you some of the steps we have already taken and actions we propose for the future to improve the hiring process for HR professionals, our managers, and job applicants.

At the core of GSA's human capital efforts is its Human Capital Strategic Plan ("Plan"). Linked directly to the agency's Strategic Plan, our Plan provides the roadmap to guide our recruitment efforts. One of the seven human capital goals outlined in the Plan focuses our attention on competing for and retaining a talented and engaged workforce. To compliment our Human Capital Strategic Plan, we conduct workforce planning and analysis to assess hiring and attrition trends. This analysis helps to identify: occupational series which pose recruitment challenges, separation trends among core occupational series, reasons why we lose talent, as well as forecasting likely voluntary retirements. From this data, GSA is able to anticipate where strategies are needed for recruiting and retaining talent and devising customized strategies for various occupations.

To help recruit and retain talent, GSA has employed a number of pay and other incentives. Use of these incentives has enabled GSA to hire and retain the most talented, highly qualified candidates and a current workforce in geographical areas where it is difficult to identify and attract employees with the specific skills, knowledge and experience required to fulfill the agency's mission.

GSA's attrition rates stands around 8%, in line with the overall government-wide rate, for the last several years. This means that we must continuously attract new talent to fill the vacated positions. GSA has been able to effectively attract talent by employing a variety of strategies. One key to maintaining our steady staffing levels within GSA is that we have capitalized on our status as one of the top ten "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" and promote this achievement in our vacancy announcements. We are using a "You Can Do That Here!" marketing strategy that helps applicants understand the range of work offered at GSA. We use a wide range of workplace flexibilities as part of our recruitment efforts: student loan repayment, telework, relocation incentives, alternate work schedules, transit subsidies, flexible work hours, child-care subsidy program and more.

Our workforce statistics show that our workforce is stable. However, we recognize that in today's global market it is imperative that we take action to set us apart as an employer of choice and to do what we must to improve our hiring process with regard to how long it takes to fill a position. We need to improve the manager and the applicant experience. To achieve these goals, we launched a "Lean Hiring" initiative that focuses on specific actions that can be taken to improve the timeliness and quality of our hiring process. Through "Lean Hiring" we are taking a critical look at HR service delivery in five key areas including: policy, planning, systems, structure and processes.

Through this initiative, we are reviewing all of our employment policies related to staffing and recruitment to determine if they meet our needs. We are prepared to abolish those that impede our hiring goals and develop ones that can expedite the process. "Lean Hiring" will also help us develop a more systematic workforce planning process. The focus is on defining the current state, the ideal state and the gaps. The review and analysis will provide a clear understanding of workforce planning at GSA from the perspective of the GSA senior management from across the country.

Another important aspect of "Lean Hiring" is increased collaboration between HR professionals and managers. Active engagement in our customer's strategic planning sessions will result in HR solutions that meet their business requirements. We are identifying key touch points in the process where HR professionals will engage with managers so that the hiring plan is executed as planned and adjustments can be made as quickly as possible.

GSA is working to improve the management consideration and selection phase of the hiring process by providing managers with the advice, guidance and assistance necessary to make appropriate and timely selections. Our HR professionals will assist selecting officials with their panel member composition while the vacancy announcement is open, and they will provide selecting officials with suggested interview questions and a standardized reference check questionnaire. We have also created an electronic Job Analysis Library, which reduces the time needed to prepare the vacancy announcement by providing managers with standardized language they can use to create the announcement.

To improve a job applicant's experience, we are improving the integration between the USAjobs website and our hiring system to make it easier to apply for a job at GSA. Job applicants will be able to electronically access and upload their resume and other documentation they have built into USAjobs to apply for GSA positions. This eliminates the current requirement to create the information in two different systems, USAjobs and GSAjobs. The GSAjobs system will have a clearly defined process by which applicants can extend their eligibility on standing registers. GSA will be able to send an advance notice to applicants prior to the eligibility expiration date on standing registers. Applicants will be able to view and extend their eligibility on-line. GSAjobs will also be improved to allow applicants to submit documents electronically with attached files rather than submitting them via fax. Documents will be stored electronically eliminating the need to resubmit them for future vacancies.

We have already been able to make headway in improving our processes through "Lean Hiring." We have streamlined our vacancy announcements to be more efficient and to improve the applicant experience when applying for jobs. We have expanded the use of the standing register for mission critical occupations nationwide. Additionally, we also created several geographically-

specific standing registers aligned to address the agency's urgent human capital needs associated with the provisions of the Recovery Act and have a centralized point of contact to maintain all registers. These additional registers were established to develop the highly skilled and talented applicant pools needed to meet this specific mission. We have also engaged the support of a group from GSA's Advanced Leadership Development program, one of GSA's developmental programs under our Leadership Institute, which will conduct a survey of selecting officials and employees. This recently released survey will help us get feedback on the hiring process associated with our standing registers.

Other actions that we are taking to expedite the hiring process include a GSA sponsored "Hire Fair" in mid-July. Vacancy announcements will be posted 60 days in advance of the "Hire Fair" and all qualified candidates will be invited to the event. The "Hire Fair" brings together these pre-screened, highly qualified applicants and hiring officials. Applicants invited to the "Hire Fair" are given an opportunity to interview with the management officials who will be able to make selections the day of the event. This event will expedite the hiring process and provide on-the-spot job offers.

In addition, GSA will participate in a number of other events sponsored by Government groups, associations, and universities over the months ahead. Some of these events include: Public Service Recognition Week, GSA Expo, Federally Employed Women conference, Blacks in Government conference, Diversity Job Fair, Military Officers Association of America conference, National Contract Management Association World Congress, James Madison University's Job Fair, and more.

Despite the successes we have enjoyed, one area that remains a concern and a recruitment and retention challenge to GSA is in the acquisition field. Our acquisition workforce is critical to GSA's mission of leveraging the buying power of the Federal Government to acquire best value for taxpayers and our Federal customers. Although the percentage of hires has shown an increase, there remains a significant shortage of skilled acquisition professionals. Workforce data also indicates that approximately 33% of GSA acquisition employees will be eligible to retire within the next 5 years and approximately 40% will be eligible to retire within the next 7 years. We also lose staff to other agencies that are able to offer higher grades or increased pay through pay banding. We know this because we track data on which agencies we tend to lose employees to and we know when our employees are being offered higher grades.

To increase focus on this area we developed a succession plan that outlines strategies to address recruitment, retention and development of the acquisition workforce. The plan outlines a clear and achievable strategy for employees to obtain the necessary skills to successfully advance to higher levels of authority in the acquisition field. This will benefit GSA by ensuring that we have a highly

skilled cadre of acquisition professionals who can successfully function in a variety of acquisition positions. The plan supports the expanded and cohesive use of a variety of hiring options including the Presidential Management Fellows Program, Federal Career Intern Program, Peace Corps Staff, Veteran's Recruitment Appointment, the Student Career Experience Program, as well as the continued use of hiring and retention incentives.

GSA has authority to use dual compensation waivers to hire retired federal employees who have served as Contracting Officers. This will provide GSA with essential skills at the higher grade levels to fill skills gaps in its acquisition workforce. We also have direct hire authority which enables us to expedite the hiring process for acquisition professionals. We are using standing registers or open continuous announcements that provide us with a ready inventory of qualified applicants. These registers also make it easier for job applicants and eliminate the need for them to continuously apply for positions. We are also implementing a notification process so that applicants will know when their standing on a register will end and how they can extend it on-line.

GSA will continue to look at ways that we can make the overall hiring experience more productive for managers and "user friendly" for applicants. This includes expanded marketing of GSA to help promote jobs at our agency. We need to look at ways to provide more timely feedback to job applicants; focus on improvements to our IT systems to work more efficiently and effectively for our HR professionals; continue to improve our succession process; give careers at GSA higher prominence on our GSA.gov web site; and ensure that our managers are even more engaged in the hiring process.

I am confident that as we implement the improvements I have outlined, GSA will achieve our goal of having skilled and engaged talent, in the right jobs, at the right time to carry out the core mission of our agency. Additionally, I look forward to working with the new Director of the Office of Personnel Management and my fellow members of the Chief Human Capital Officers' Council to develop Government-wide solutions to address issues with the hiring process. Chairman Akaka, Ranking Member Voinovich, and Members of the Subcommittee, I want to thank you again for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. Thanks for all you do to support the Federal workforce and happy Public Service Recognition Week! I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.



**Written Testimony of Max Stier  
President and CEO, Partnership for Public Service**

Prepared for

**The Senate Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs  
Subcommittee on the Oversight of Government Management,  
the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia**

**Hearing Entitled,  
“Uncle Sam Wants You!: Recruitment in the Federal  
Government”**

May 7, 2009

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am Max Stier, President and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing the federal civil service. We appreciate your invitation to discuss recruitment and hiring in the federal government, particularly during *Public Service Recognition Week*, which you have made possible. A skilled and dedicated workforce is absolutely essential to fulfilling the many missions of the federal government on behalf of our nation, and we are honored to share with you our perspective on the challenges of building and maintaining a world-class federal civil service.

The Partnership has two principal areas of focus. First, we work to inspire new talent to join federal service. Second, we work with government leaders to help transform government so that the best and brightest will enter, stay and succeed in meeting the challenges of our nation. That includes all aspects of how we manage people, from attracting them to government, leading them, supporting their development and managing performance; in short, all the essential ingredients for forming and keeping a winning team. Given those objectives, we are highly encouraged by this Subcommittee's interest in fixing one of the most serious barriers the federal government faces in employing the right people with the right skills, and that is the federal hiring process.

In this testimony, I will share the Partnership's views on the most significant challenges in recruitment and hiring, our recommendations for improvement, and our comments on S. 736, the *Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act of 2009*.

#### **An Urgent Need for Action**

Today, our nation faces challenges of unprecedented complexity – from an economy in crisis to piracy on the high seas, from pandemic flu to the search for alternative sources of energy. While intelligent people can disagree on the optimal size of government, or the appropriate reach of government, there can be no disagreement that Americans need and deserve *effective* government -- and the key to good government is good people *in* government.

Meeting the challenges before us will require nothing less than a rebuilding and a revitalization of our federal workforce. A record number of experienced federal workers will soon retire, resign or otherwise leave the government and will need to be replaced. At the same time, the federal government's hiring needs are also growing in response to the stimulus legislation, new or expanded programs, and the goal of having federal employees assume some functions currently done by contract employees. We project that the federal government will make over 580,000 full-time, permanent new hires through 2012. Potential applicants are out there – indeed, the number of applications for federal employment doubled this year over last year – but the challenge is to attract and hire the *right* people with the *right* skills that government so desperately needs. Another challenge for our government is to retain and develop talented individuals already in the federal workforce. Aggressive and immediate action is needed to strengthen the federal

civil service, match new skills to current challenges, and build a government that the public deserves and the times demand.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to revitalize our federal government. What we do now will have major implications for how we cope with immediate crises like the H1N1 virus and how well we ensure our nation's long-term prosperity. And the success or failure of government is linked directly to the health of our federal workforce and its capacity to execute and implement government policies effectively. With the stakes so high, the focus of today's Subcommittee hearing could not be more needed, or more timely.

Current challenges are changing the way that Americans look at government. Citizens are looking to our government for solutions in numbers not seen since the Great Depression. It is imperative that government has the in-house skills and expertise needed to deliver results. This is an exceedingly rare opportunity for the federal government to regain the trust of the American people – let's not waste it.

#### **I. Attracting, Recruiting and Hiring the Right Talent**

The federal government will live up to its potential in serving the American people only when our best and brightest answer the call to federal service and have strong leaders who empower them to perform at their best. The government faces significant hurdles in finding, recruiting, assessing and hiring individuals with critical skills that government needs today.

##### **Demographic challenges add urgency**

In our 2008 "Brain Drain" issue brief, the Partnership reported that over a five-year period, federal agencies will lose nearly 530,000 employees, the majority through retirement. While this projected number may be slightly smaller today as people defer retirement due to the economic crisis, we can say with confidence that at a minimum, the federal government is facing a drain of experienced talent. At best, these losses could adversely impact the delivery of services to the public; at worst, they could cripple our ability to meet core government functions.

Many of the individuals nearing retirement hold leadership and critical skills positions. Among those employed in federal service in January 2008, 76 percent of the Senior Executive Service – government's elite cadre of senior managers – will be eligible to retire by 2012. We have also projected that by 2012, retirements at 23 large agencies will near 20 percent of their workforces. These include agencies that provide direct and highly visible services to the public, such as the Federal Aviation Administration and the Social Security Administration. The Department of Defense, the largest federal agency, is expected to lose close to 20 percent of its more than 600,000 civilian employees through retirement from 2008 through 2012.



The problem is further compounded by an insufficient number of younger employees in federal service. There simply are not enough young employees working in government today to support the future demands of the workforce. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) data from 2008, the federal civil service has a greater percentage of workers over the age of 45 (58.1%) than the overall U.S. workforce (42.2%). A graying workforce makes identifying the next generation of public servants all the more urgent – but as this Subcommittee well knows, young talent is often discouraged by the federal hiring process, discussed later in this testimony.

#### **The federal government is an attractive employer**

Many people inside and outside of government lament a lack of interest in government service by job seekers in general. Research by the Partnership, however, refutes this assumption, emphatically. Indeed, there is a high level of interest in government service among all age groups, from young people graduating from college to more seasoned professionals looking for encore careers.

Our January 2009 report, *“Great Expectations: What Students Want in an Employer and How Federal Agencies Can Deliver It,”* found that government/public service is the most popular industry choice out of 46 options among the undergraduates surveyed. We also found, however, that interest in government service is lower among groups government needs most, including students with technical and scientific majors.

Young people are not the only talent source for government. In January 2007, the Partnership launched *FedExperience*, an initiative to enhance government’s recruitment of experienced workers and enlist potential partners to fuel interest in federal service. We learned through our *FedExperience* survey research<sup>1</sup> that older Americans, including those who have retired from successful private sector and other careers, make attractive candidates to fill government’s many critical vacancies – and better yet, we know that many of them are interested in doing so. About 53 percent of older workers surveyed are at least somewhat interested in working for the federal government, with 26 percent highly interested.

The barrier to recruiting individuals to government service is not a lack of interest, but rather, a lack of information about job opportunities and a negative view of federal hiring.

#### **Lack of information is a barrier to recruitment**

Our nation’s military spends millions of dollars on highly-targeted marketing campaigns to recruit new uniformed military personnel, but when it comes to attracting young people to the civilian workforce, agencies are largely flying blind. Much more needs to be done to understand how federal agencies can best inform new talent about job opportunities and attract them to federal service.

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<sup>1</sup> Partnership for Public Service, *A Golden Opportunity: Recruiting Baby Boomers Into Government* (2007).

The *Call to Serve* program is a joint OPM/Partnership effort to connect federal agencies to the tremendous source of new talent graduating from our nation's colleges and universities. The network includes over 75 federal agencies and over 660 colleges and universities from all 50 states who are doing more to educate young people about internship and job opportunities in the federal government.

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of federal hiring efforts, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees provided \$600,000 in fiscal year 2006 to the Partnership and OPM for the *Call to Serve Recruitment Initiative*. The *Recruitment Initiative* was a study on five college campuses designed to identify successful, cost-effective agency recruitment practices that are sustainable and replicable across different campuses to increase student awareness of, and interest in, federal jobs. We found that on the whole, college students are very interested in federal service but lack knowledge about federal opportunities. Forty-two percent of college juniors and seniors said that they were extremely or very interested in federal government jobs – only eight points lower than the interest in large private sector companies. The greatest challenge for agencies, however, is that only 13 percent of students said they felt extremely or very knowledgeable about federal jobs. Further, fewer than two in ten faculty and advisors – those who help influence student decisions – felt they were knowledgeable about federal jobs and the process of finding and applying for those opportunities.

According to our survey, students need more information about the types of opportunities that exist in the federal government. They need to understand how to find and apply for a federal internship or job, and they seek information that is tailored to their particular interests and background. Federal agencies would do well to remember that “high touch” is as important as “high tech;” while technology may aid in recruitment efforts and provide access to information, there is no substitute for personal connections – family, friends and faculty, among others -- when it comes to generating interest.

In addition, students search for positions where they can do interesting work and where they will have an opportunity to make a difference. Recruiters will be more successful if they can dispel myths about federal service, emphasize opportunities to serve the greater good and put a face on government, which is often perceived as overly bureaucratic. (Indeed, 53 percent of students cite bureaucracy as the reason they would not want to work for the federal government.) Agencies should strategically target their recruitment efforts on campuses and should build and maintain relationships with faculty advisors and career services professionals. Recruiters could also be more successful by highlighting the government workplace flexibilities that contribute to work/life balance, one of the most important job attributes that young employees are seeking.

The Partnership has built on the findings of the *Recruitment Initiative* in several exciting ways:

- We have created the *Federal Service Student Ambassadors* program, which develops a corps of passionate student advocates who actively promote government service on campus following their completion of a federal summer internship.

- We have created [www.MakingTheDifference.org](http://www.MakingTheDifference.org), a website dedicated to educating students on finding and applying for federal jobs and internships. This website ranks #1 in a Google search for “federal internships.”
- Our *Annenberg Speakers Bureau* is a dynamic, diverse group of federal employees who educate audiences about the federal workforce and inspire a new generation to serve. Speakers visit college campuses and other student venues to promote public service and provide resources that will raise awareness of federal opportunities among young people.
- We recommend policies that would improve government’s ability to tap into the talent on our nation’s campuses; for example, our recent report entitled *Leaving Talent on the Table: The Need to Capitalize on High Performing Student Interns*, outlines recommendations to help the federal government end its benign neglect of student internship programs and use this valuable resource to hire talented young professionals, improve government performance and better serve the American people.
- Through our *FedRecruit* initiative, we are helping a small group of federal agencies identify, attract and recruit entry-level talent in key fields. We are currently in phase one of this project and are working with three agencies to recruit acquisition professionals; phases two and three will seek to recruit information technology specialists and nurses, respectively, to federal service.

The college and university population is just one place where the federal government can find new talent; federal hiring needs are so acute that it makes sense for federal agencies to tap many pipelines of talent, including the millions of highly-skilled older workers in all sectors of the economy. This is especially important as many initiatives identified in the stimulus legislation and recovery plans require the skill and talents of experienced workers who, in many cases, need to continue to work.

To help address government’s critical talent needs, the Partnership for Public Service launched the *FedExperience* pilot program with federal agencies, corporate partners, and other stakeholders to match government’s critical hiring needs with the talents of experienced, older workers. There is substantial interest in pursuing federal “encore” employment opportunities among America’s tens of millions of baby boomers – and these boomers possess the types of skills, experience and commitment our government needs. However, their knowledge about federal jobs is low. Only 11% of older Americans surveyed indicated they are very knowledgeable about employment opportunities in the federal government.

To take advantage of the interests and skills of baby boomers and to increase their knowledge of federal jobs, the *FedExperience* pilot program explores new and expanded means for government to overcome institutional barriers and tap into the growing talent source of experienced workers. This includes the design of specific strategies for marketing federal job opportunities to this talent pool, use of targeted recruitment and enhanced hiring processes to obtain proven talent, and better orientation, onboarding and retention of mature workers so their contributions will continue into the future.

### **Existing personnel flexibilities are under-utilized**

Federal agencies have access to a variety of personnel flexibilities that enable them to recruit, retain and manage their workforces. However, use of these existing tools is uneven at best. The tools and authorities available to federal agencies are many, and include recruitment, retention and relocation bonuses; student loan repayment incentives; direct hiring authority; critical pay authority; non-competitive conversion authority; and category ranking, among others.

Not all personnel authorities just mentioned are right for all agencies. Rather, they comprise a “tool-kit” for agencies seeking to shape their workforces and to fit the right talent in the right jobs. Some agencies, like the State Department and the Government Accountability Office, have found that offering student loan repayment is a powerful incentive for young talent considering federal service. Yet, on the whole, federal agencies do not appear to be using these tools to their best advantage. This is due in part to a lack of resources, a lack of familiarity with available tools and how to use them, and the need for additional guidance from OPM.

We will also note that not all of the tools just mentioned require a significant expense. For example, our new report, *Leaving Talent on the Table: The Need to Capitalize on High-Performing Student Interns*, reported that federal internships are a grossly under-utilized tool for identifying and assessing potential new talent. In 2007, 59,510 students participated in the federal government’s largest internship programs, the Student Temporary Experience Program (STEP) and the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). The vast majority of these students – 45,000 – participated in the STEP program, but only SCEP offers a built-in mechanism that makes it relatively easy for federal agencies to offer permanent employment to interns with desirable skills and aptitudes. Many federal agencies make little use of SCEP, the internship program that provides the best chance for a student to convert to full-time civil service employment. The result is that only 6.6 percent of student interns in these programs were converted to permanent full-time jobs in 2007, a dismal rate when one considers that the private sector hired 50 percent of their interns into permanent positions. Surely, the federal government can and must do better.

### **The federal hiring process is broken.**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, the federal hiring process is the biggest obstacle to bringing much-needed new talent into the federal workforce. Your legislation, S. 736, the *Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act*, comes at a critical time for our government.

Long a source of frustration for agencies and applicants alike, the federal hiring process is not designed with applicants in mind and it discourages talent from all sources from pursuing federal service. A Partnership review of hiring at selected agencies revealed that the process for hiring a single employee can include more than 110 steps. Some federal job applicants wait a year, or longer, before receiving a job offer. And some

potential workers do not wait at all because the job announcement itself discourages them from applying in the first place. Sometimes running 10, 20 or even more pages in print form, federal job announcements are frequently confusing and filled with jargon indecipherable to the average person. Federal agencies often require applicants to submit college transcripts in short job application timeframes and to customize resumes to meet specific agency requirements. Also, agencies generally do a poor job of keeping applicants informed of the status of their applications – a basic courtesy that should be afforded to all job seekers. The end result is a difficult, lengthy and complex process that discourages many highly skilled candidates from pursuing federal service – and worse, once a hire is made, many managers are unhappy with the result.

The Partnership recently reached out to the career placement offices in the colleges and universities who are part of our *Call to Serve* network with a survey about changes in student interest in federal jobs and internships. Out of 258 respondents, 41 of them volunteered written comments on the problems with the application and hiring processes, USAJOBS, and the length of time it takes to respond to job applications. In our experience, for such a high number of respondents to volunteer written comments is a clear signal as to the depth and breadth of applicant discontent with federal hiring. Among the comments we received are the following:

- “Listings of jobs are incredibly wordy and filled with government-ese language that puts students off.”
- “Any beginning interest or curiosity from students just discovering the arena of federal jobs and internships often tends to dissolve once they learn more about the application process, the need to customize each resume to a particular job or internship, KSA demands, et cetera. It’s often simply just more work and effort than they want or choose to make, no matter how promising the jobs or internships might be.”
- “While student interest is high, their frustrations with the slow process continue to be a hindrance. They are also confused by the multiple sites they must consider in their job search.”

To its credit, the Office of Personnel Management undertook an interagency effort last year to improve the federal hiring process, and we are encouraged that the new director of OPM, John Berry, has said he will make improving federal hiring a priority. Given the nature of the problem, this effort will need to be sustained and given a high priority over an extended period of time. While good progress is being made, there is no time to waste.

We believe that, at a minimum, all agencies should adopt a user-friendly application process (for example, allowing a resume to serve as an application whenever possible); clearly written job announcements; timely and useful information about the status of an application; and a timely hiring decision. We strongly support S. 736, the *Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act*, which was introduced last month by Chairman Akaka and Senator Voinovich. This bipartisan legislation will make the federal hiring process more applicant-friendly, measure hiring effectiveness and train agency human resources

professionals. The Partnership strongly encourages the Subcommittee to make this legislation a top priority, and we offer specific comments on the bill below.

## II. S. 736, the *Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act*

Mr. Chairman, Senator Voinovich, the Partnership for Public Service strongly supports S. 736, the *Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act of 2009*. Your bill takes the very necessary step of rethinking federal hiring from the perspective of an applicant, and it sets ambitious improvement objectives for both OPM and federal agencies.

The many strengths of S. 736 include:

- the requirement for each agency to develop a strategic workforce plan that includes hiring projections and recruitment strategies;
- the requirement to make those hiring projections public;
- the requirement that agencies seek to target a diverse set of applicants and to build relationships with targeted applicant pools;
- the emphasis on “plain writing” in job announcements;
- allowing a cover letter, resume and responses to a few brief questions to serve as application for employment;
- not imposing lengthy written requirements such as knowledge, skills and ability essays as part of an initial application;
- not requiring the submission of additional material in support of an application unless necessary to complete the hiring process;
- requirements to involve the hiring manager in the hiring process;
- the requirement to keep applicants informed as to the status of their application;
- the training provided for human resources professionals; and,
- the measures of federal hiring effectiveness.

We believe this excellent bill can be enhanced even further with a few additional modifications, which we submit for the Subcommittee’s consideration:

- *Applicant assessment* – Hiring well demands more than identifying, attracting and recruiting new talent; it also requires an effective system for assessing job applicants and their qualifications. We suggest that Section 5(a) on the application process include language to provide for “a valid, job-related assessment process to help identify the best candidates for the position to be filled and which does not place an unreasonable burden upon potential applicants.”
- *Student internships* – Student employment and internship programs present an ideal opportunity for federal agencies to see student employees in action, assess their performance and identify those who would be strong candidates for permanent employment – yet few federal agencies make good use of student employment programs for this purpose. We suggest including language under Section 9 on measures of federal hiring effectiveness to require agencies to

measure and collect data on their use of student employees as a talent pool for permanent hires.

- *Strategic workforce planning* – We applaud the requirement in Section 3 that agencies prepare and submit strategic workforce plans. We encourage the Subcommittee to consider whether OPM should be directed to use the agency plans as the basis for a government-wide strategic workforce plan that would take into account the multi-sector workforce and address the capacity of federal employees to manage contractors and other non-federal employees who are doing the work of government.
- *Mapping the current process* – Section 8 of the bill directs the head of each agency to develop a plan to reduce the length of the hiring process. Based on our experience, we believe that this must start with an analysis and mapping of each agency’s current hiring process to allow for a thorough understanding of the bottlenecks and a clear view of the opportunities for improvement. We encourage the Subcommittee to include language requiring an analysis and mapping of the current process in each agency in accordance with standards established by OPM.
- *Timely release of data* – S. 736 requires that each agency’s measures of hiring effectiveness (Section 9) be provided to OPM, and that OPM provide the information to Congress and the public in a consistent format. To ensure that such data are made available to the public in a timely manner, we suggest adding language to require that OPM provide the required information to the public within 90 days of receiving it from the agencies.
- *Resources* – S. 736 authorizes additional resources for OPM to meet its responsibilities under the Act. We encourage the Subcommittee to consider including some recognition in the bill that other federal agencies will also need to devote resources to implementing the bill’s requirements, even if it is through a reallocation of existing resources.
- *Applicant inventory* – The bill requires that OPM establish and maintain an inventory of job applicants. We recommend ensuring that this inventory, if established, allows agencies to search applicants based on useful criteria (e.g., occupation, skills, geography and/or prior experience). We also suggest that this inventory should be clearly separate and apart from any specific job announcements or applications a candidate may submit.

### **III. Additional Recommendations**

In addition to our suggestions regarding S. 736, the *Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act*, the Partnership is pleased to offer the following recommendations to the Subcommittee as you pursue your legislative and oversight agenda regarding federal recruitment and hiring:

1. Congress should build new pipelines of mission-critical talent into government by passing the *Roosevelt Scholars Act*, a proposal to fund education in key fields in exchange for a federal service commitment.
2. Better and more frequent data are essential for Congress to conduct necessary oversight of how agencies are managing the federal workforce. We recommend that the Office of Personnel Management conduct the Federal Human Capital Survey on an annual basis, and release the data as soon as its accuracy can be assured. This will enable federal agencies to make real-time course corrections where needed; provide an annual benchmark capability by providing consistent data across agency lines; and provide Congress a more timely and informative oversight tool.
3. Federal agencies must re-imagine and reinvent the ways in which they recruit, assess, hire and utilize employees. Government's hiring needs range from entry level to experienced personnel working under a variety of work arrangements, including full-time permanent, part-time and temporary jobs. Agencies must become increasingly nimble and creative in reaching out to a diverse pool of candidates at different points in their careers. Congress should encourage agency efforts to adapt their recruiting, assessment and hiring practices so that the most talented external and internal candidates with needed skills are recruited and then have a fair opportunity to compete for federal jobs based on their education and experience.
4. Congress must ensure that federal agencies measure the impact of various human resources tools and how they are used, or not used, toward the goals of recruiting, hiring and retaining the right talent from diverse talent pools. We encourage Congress to ask for the collection of metrics to assess how agencies are using these flexibilities, which flexibilities are most effective at attracting and retaining particular demographic groups, whether using flexibilities are resulting in good hires for government and how flexibilities can be used more effectively. We also encourage the collection of data from employees; for example, a periodic third-party exit survey of departing employees would do much to shed light on the factors that contribute to employee engagement, including the tools and practices that might have been more successful in attracting and keeping needed talent.
5. Congress should provide resources for federal agencies so that they are able to make the best possible use of the flexibilities that are available. Without adequate funding, agencies will be severely constrained in their use of human resources tools to recruit, hire, retain and develop the right talent for government. Congress may wish to consider reserving funds specifically for investments in (a) federal workforce recruitment, retention and development, and (b) training and developing the federal human resources workforce. Investing in talent is an investment that will more than pay for itself over time.



**Conclusion**

The Partnership believes that the way to better government is through people. No federal agency can succeed if it does not have enough of the right people with the right skills to get the job done. While we have long argued that more investment in the capacity of the federal workforce is desperately needed, recent economic and public health challenges add a new sense of urgency to your efforts to help our government improve its recruitment and hiring.

We applaud the Subcommittee for holding this hearing – especially during *Public Service Recognition Week* – and we look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of S. 736, the *Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act of 2009*.

Thank you.

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2009

TESTIMONY OF LINDA BROOKS RIX, CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
AVUE TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION  
*BEFORE THE*  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,  
THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU!  
RECRUITMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation *Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, Senators, thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before the subcommittee today to speak about recruiting for the Federal workforce. My name is Linda Rix and I am Co-Chief Executive Officer of Avue Technologies Corporation. We are a company that provides a native Federal, web-based human capital technology platform to U.S. government agencies. Most Federal contractors are outsourcing firms; Avue is an insourcing firm. Outsourcing firms work to transfer work and jobs from Federal employees to outside contractors, usually at more than double the cost. In contrast, Avue's expert technology system and service support is specifically designed to enable Federal employees to more effectively and efficiently do their jobs, usually saving agencies 50% per year in the process. Millions of applicants apply for Federal jobs using Avue every year. Non-profit employee organizations partner with Avue to ensure a non-discriminatory, merit-based hiring process continues to be supported as hiring becomes increasingly more automated – and that includes supporting Veterans' Preference. These organizations include the American Federation of Government Employees, the American Legion, Blacks in Government, the Federal Asian Pacific American Council, and Federally Employed Women to name a few.

At Avue, we know that technology is an HR force multiplier and have the experience and data to back it. We believe technology is the best way for the Government to reach diverse and skilled applicant pools. We believe HR is inherently governmental and the Federal workforce supplying these critical services needs to be strengthened. We believe Title 5 is an adaptive and relevant personnel system if OPM would maintain the policy structure and invest in keeping policies current.

The requirement for effective recruitment of candidates for the Federal workforce is urgent. The Federal Government is an employer of choice for millions of Americans, and the current recession makes putting our citizens to work immediately an absolute necessity. On top of that, you in the Congress and the Administration have launched what amounts to an "Insourcing Revolution," a recognition that only by bringing contracted-out jobs back in house can the executive branch make government both effective and affordable. To achieve these goals, we must reform how we go about the business of reaching out to Americans and filling Federal jobs. Much has been said over the past 5 years about the upcoming "retirement tsunami". In our analysis of Federal workforce trends, we find that the nation need not wait for this theoretical event. When it comes to Federal hiring, the Government is already under water. The difference between OPM's FedScope reported employment totals and GPO-published full-time equivalent (FTE) authorization levels reveals that the Federal sector has been understaffed by between 130,000 to 150,000 authorized and funded positions *each year* since 2005. Couple that with the addition of new positions, driven in part by the Recovery Act

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2 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation *Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*

and in part by key insourcing initiatives, and that number grows to between 230,000 to 380,000 vacancies. We are already in a “fierce urgency of now” moment.<sup>1</sup>

Current Federal recruiting capabilities, however, are simply not up to the task of recruiting enough workers to address this shortfall. Right now, most Federal agencies rely on insufficient business processes and outdated technologies that leave the vast majority of recruiting and hiring to manual processes. In the agencies that follow this approach to human resources, their inadequacy becomes evident by considering a single staggering statistic: one human resource FTE in these agencies fills, on average, 10 to 12 jobs *per year*.

Several developments have contributed to this low level of HR operational capacity, including a reduction in the total number of HR personnel in the Federal Government at the same time that the demand for HR services has risen, and the tendency of many agencies, encouraged by the previous administration, to seek operational efficiency by relying on centralized service centers for their HR operations. This factor in particular has contributed to a growing disconnect between the anonymous, distantly located HR worker and the hiring manager they are ostensibly there to serve.

To address these shortcomings, the Federal sector must take immediate action on three inter-related fronts. First, it must adopt state of the art technology solutions and allow those solutions to drive the most efficient and effective recruitment and staffing processes. Second, OPM must reestablish its primary role as a policy setting and leadership body, setting standards, rather than methods or tools, and allowing agencies to operate within these standards in a manner that best supports the agency’s mission. Third, it must replenish its human resource organizations with highly skilled, innovation-oriented new hires, provide in-depth training and development. Taken together, these three actions can close the gap between agency capacity and demand for HR services.

I want to emphasize that this task is eminently achievable within the current legal and regulatory framework. Contrary to the myth that Title 5 keeps agencies from efficiently and effectively hiring the best talent, the facts demonstrate to the contrary. Together with the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection and the Merit System principles, Title 5 ensures a merit-based, non-discriminatory hiring and employment environment that is highly attractive to talented employees and recruits. Sub-optimal processes are not dictated by this framework, but rather generally attributable to outdated technology and the continued use of time-hardened agency practices that are nowhere to be found in statute or regulation.

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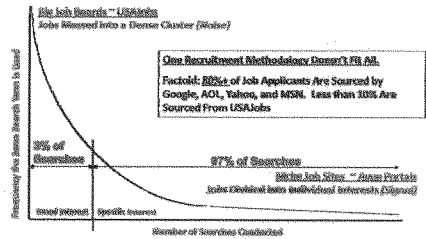
<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for the White Paper, “The State of the Federal Workforce: A Case for Insourcing” by Avue Technologies Corporation.

3 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation *Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia “Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*

For example, Avue’s client agencies raise their HR-to-hiring ratio to more than double the agency average by using open-continuous job announcements that are continuously recruiting a supply of applicants. The agency electronically reaches out to applicants in the pool every 60 days to ensure the prospective candidates-in-waiting are still interested and available. Information about their status and the jobs available are pushed to them via email and posted on each applicant’s account for 24x7 lookup. If the agency is particularly aggressive in recruiting, the announcement will cover all jobs in all locations so that applicants take only minutes to apply to a range of positions in a number of locations. One Avue client has used this methodology for continuous recruitment over a 7 year period with outstanding results. By using this process, a list of quality candidates can go forward to the hiring manager in hours rather than months. Time consuming process steps, like posting each vacancy individually, are eliminated and quality matches between applicant and job, and applicant and hiring manager, are significantly improved.

In Avue, job postings are broadcast to over 1,600 .org and .edu sites in the Avue recruitment sources library – representing diversity groups, professional associations, colleges and universities, and Federal employee organizations. That list is refreshed every 60 days. With the right technology, it is possible to have the best of all worlds in Federal hiring – speed, quality, and a high-touch recruitment process. On top of all these benefits, the process is extremely economical and allows agencies to spend precious resources on matching the best candidates to jobs and working with hiring managers to conduct high quality candidate selections.

A key issue the Federal Government also needs to address is the overreliance on posting positions to big job boards, especially USAJobs, as a substitute to substantive recruiting programs and meaningful process improvements in the staffing function. USAJobs is a public notice job posting site, as it is accurately depicted in the proposed Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act. Meeting the requirements of public notice posting should never be confused with recruitment. In fact, job boards that aggregate diverse and large numbers of postings on a single site are found by applicants to be confusing and disappointing. In examining the data for all of the agencies using Avue today, 80% the applicants for Avue agency jobs find the posting by using the common Internet search engines: AOL, Yahoo, MSN, and Google. Only 10% of applicants flow from USAJobs – most are already Federal employees – and the remaining



4 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Riv, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

10% are sourced from the agency's home page.<sup>2</sup>

On average, 61% of the applicants who see an interesting vacancy posted by an Avue client complete the total application process. In 2008, Avue agencies averaged 45 *completed* applications *per vacancy*. Certain jobs pulled between 700 and 1,100 applications. Avue agencies use a structured questionnaire rather than KSA essays to complete their applications and only 8% drop at the point at which they are asked to complete this questionnaire. While much has been said about the "daunting" nature of the Federal hiring process, data show that, in fact, it is possible to keep within the Merit System and Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection procedures and offer an application process that is simple and easy to use.



Not surprisingly, applicants prefer sites that are tailored to specific occupations that display key job requirements in a simple form. Avue presents job search results in a simple table that displays the employer, the location, the salary, and the job title. Applicants can drill down into specifics from there. Avue clients use our services to create both custom job portals by occupation, such as acquisition or medical careers, as well as major mission area or hiring initiative, such as hiring for the Stimulus jobs.

Use of résumés as the principal application process, in an effort to streamline the process, creates a false economy. Résumé management systems are cumbersome, ill-equipped to return accurate searches, elongate the hiring process, and introduce subjectivity at a level that undermines the merit system, veterans' preference, and the Uniform Guidelines. Accepting résumés as an expression of interest still requires processing work that can undermine the efficiency of the process and positive employer-applicant relationships. While a résumé, in its original form, is an excellent way for applicants to convey their skills, today's technology requires far less effort – an email address will suffice – and using a simpler method results in a more efficient process.

Avue agencies need only enter an email address to enter a candidate into a pool of potential recruits – whether the applicant provides it online or the agency inputs it at a job fair. Avue

<sup>2</sup> Graphic concept from "The Long Tail" by Chris Anderson.

5 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

agency recruitment portals allow applicants to enter their email address and complete a career interest profile. When these agencies post positions that match that profile, the candidate is automatically notified via email and can enter and apply directly to that position. Using a structured questionnaire helps applicants understand job requirements without reading cumbersome Federal vacancy announcements full of Fed-speak, and from there they can elect to apply or opt out if the job requirements do not match their skills or meet their needs.

Technology is also the best way to inform candidates of their status and the status of hiring actions they are interested in as candidates. In Avue, for example, candidates have 24x7 lookup into the status of their application and where the hiring action is in the process under a self-service section called "Jobs I Have Applied For" which includes a complete history of that candidate's applications. Candidates can see where the hiring action is – posted, closed, in review, referred to the hiring manager, etc. In addition, automatic emails are sent as the hiring process moves forward to all applicants in the process. The most popular email is the notification sent to both applicants and managers sent 72 hours before a vacancy is scheduled to close. Applicants who have not completed their applications are encouraged to do so at that time and managers are informed of the aggregate statistics of the applicant pool to encourage the manager to stay engaged. Constant communication is the key to effective applicant-employer relationships and this is one way to achieve that.

Avue pioneered the short job summary vacancy announcement which is the primary announcement used in all Avue electronic postings. The job summary lists key facts – such as salary and location – and major job activities with contact information. Avue has found that applicants prefer this announcement to the public notice job postings such as those required by OPM. It would seem that OPM as well should be able to simplify its announcements to make the applicant's life easier. I would argue that OPM supports HR staff resistance to adopting a simpler vacancy announcement because they rely on the public notice posting as a means of articulating complex requirements to applicants. This allows agency HR staffs to avoid direct dealings with applicants, presumably to improve hiring transaction cycle time. Overreliance on these regulatory postings is extensive and often leads perilously close to merit system and other violations.

As an example, many agencies engage in a practice where notices mandate veterans submit proof documents of military service before their application is considered "complete" and submitted correctly. This essential requirement, however, is buried in the public notice posting. If the veteran does not appropriately submit the required documents, their veterans' preference is not considered. Agencies have stated that OPM "verbally" approves this practice when OPM regulations require proof documents be delivered only when a job offer is made. This "we-told-you-so" method of applicant information and relationship management is what

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6 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

technology can change dramatically. In Avue, candidates are provided information at the time they complete an application specifying the proof documents they will need at the time an offer is made – and it also allows them to attach an unlimited number of documents to their core application, which can be reused every time they apply.

This combination of modern technology and carefully crafted business processes is the indispensable key to effective Federal recruiting, as well as hiring, staffing, and the entire range of human resources operations. Despite this fact, agencies have sought to find shortcuts to success to avoid this necessary approach. For example, to accelerate the filling of positions, agencies often resort to the use of hiring “flexibilities” as a stopgap measure to fill positions quickly. An overlooked consequence of this particular shortcut, however, is the unintended consequence of eroding the core career civil service. In fact, of the new Federal hires made each year, only 25% are in the critical category of Career and Career-Conditional appointments, the backbone of the Civil Service. The quit rate of Federal Career and Career-Conditional workers exceeds the replenishment rate by an average of 37,000 employees per year for the past 5 years. On average, only 25% of all new hires are in the Career and Career-Conditional category. As “flexibilities” are used more frequently, the workforce becomes increasingly more transient and the long-term benefits of Federal employment are given to fewer and fewer new hires. As a result, retention has become a bigger and bigger problem as applicants realize that they have a *job* but not a *career* and that career ladders, promotions, training, development, and benefits are all truncated as a result. This impacts the government’s ability to assure continuity, respond to crises and national emergencies with agility, and maintain an orderly transition across Administrations. Of course, new employees will need to be hired to replace this lost talent, thereby exacerbating the government challenge with recruitment.

OPM itself has suffered from decreasing HR resources. Today, only 7.5% of OPM’s own workforce is in the human resources occupation. This has led to a severe deficit of published policies upon which all staffing in Government relies, namely qualification standards. Even agencies with alternative personnel systems, like pay banding, rely on these Title 5 standards. Only OPM can issue these standards and agencies are mandated to use them. In the last decade, OPM has issued 90% fewer classification and qualification standard than in each of the previous two decades. Of those that have been issued, the changes made are cosmetic and offer little process improvement or labor market relevance. Given the amount of reporting and workforce planning data agencies are required to submit to OPM, we believe OPM should be tasked with conducting substantive occupational studies and improve these standards so they are relevant to the skills available in the labor market and the workforce needs of Federal agencies.

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7. Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation *Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia* “Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.



Frustrated by their internal processes, many agencies have mistakenly turned to outsourcing HR to contractors, many without any expertise in Federal HR, bogging the hiring process down further. In addition, of course, the cost to government of outsourced HR work is consistently *two and one half to five times* greater than when performed by Federal employees. Avue believes that human resources is an inherently governmental function and that outsourcing the key relationship between management and its human resources professionals produces a dysfunctional human capital management program. Unfortunately, the biggest advocate for outsourcing HR in the recent past has been OPM. Its TMA contracting vehicle allows Federal agencies to outsource HR functions to OPM and OPM, in turn, funnels the funding and work to a cadre of allegedly “approved” contractors, thus bypassing procurement and A-76 competitions. This contract vehicle is a significant source of revenue netting more than \$200 million per year.

Finally, we believe that if OPM is to be an active player in providing solutions to the significant challenges facing Federal hiring, it must be required to exit the fee for service business that currently represents over 70% of its funding and 70% of its staff, and return to its core mission. OPM cannot be viewed as an “on the merits” neutral for Federal agencies under these circumstances, especially when it is known, for example, to use its audit authority to ensure sales of its outdated USAStaffing software to the very agencies it regulates, or to be widely known as using its fee-based “TMA” contract to help agencies get around applicable competition and outsourcing regulations in exchange for contract fees of 6-12%.

All of this underscores the importance of the work of this Subcommittee and its efforts to improve the processes that underlie the policies we apply to the Federal workforce. Efforts made to improve the hiring process, both in terms of the applicant experience and process improvements are essential at this time. HR operations staffs throughout government rely on the combined elements of regulation, oversight, technology, and permissions to produce change. Right now, the regulations need updating and revision, the oversight needs to return in a meaningful way, technology needs to be embraced as the most cost effective means of recruitment as well as applicant relationship management, and HR leadership need to be given overt permission to adopt innovation and change business processes to achieve the right results. The work of this Subcommittee could not be more timely. Change is made possible when the people operating the business process are given permission to seek it and oversight bodies reward those who are getting the right result. Encouragement by providing guidance and permission are key to starting the process. More work will be needed, and much of it in the form of new policies and standards issued by OPM. We hope you will move forward with supporting, if not mandating, such change.

*The State  
of the  
Federal  
Workforce*

May 4

2009

A Case for  
Insourcing  
Appendix A

## *The State of the Federal Workforce: A Case for Insourcing*

### *Introduction*

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Many Americans resist the idea of big government, but in many ways, size is not the issue—because undoubtedly, the U.S. Government has a very big job to do. By contrast, what America cannot possibly afford is bad government. The commitment of the Obama Administration has been to create the *best* government, the one that delivers on its promises to its citizens—the efficient and effective government that the American people deserve.

To meet this commitment, there is a revolution in thinking and action beginning in Washington. In some ways, this has been framed as an “Insourcing Revolution.” This phrase has come to represent both a philosophy and process for providing significantly improved, efficient and effective government—the best government we can create. It is a job that will take the effort of both the public and private sectors because it is very clearly in everyone’s interest.

The Federal government is America’s largest employer by a great margin. Although there are two million civilian employees in the Federal government, most people are shocked to learn that there are over 10 million contractors working for the Federal government—over five times as many contractors as there are civil servants. This brings the actual size of the Federal workforce to nearly 13 million workers, which is nearly 10 percent of the entire U.S. workforce.

The challenges in managing such a massively diverse and extended workforce is a daunting task—made more difficult by the pervasiveness of contractor hiring. In many instances, hiring contractors offers the government flexibility and a level of expertise that is urgently needed. But, increasingly, this “contractor class” has taken over critical government functions—often with little oversight—and at significantly higher costs than that of the average Federal worker. In fact, some estimates, one of them provided by President Obama himself, put the cost of a private sector contractor at two-and-one-half times what it would cost to employ a Federal worker to do the same job.

This paper explores the current state of the Federal workforce, including a look at hiring and retention trends for career civil service, and looks at how “insourcing”—or refocusing on the hiring of career civil servants—can benefit the nation.

*The Insourcing Revolution Is A Call to Strengthen the Career Civil Service*

“Hollow Government” is a term coined to describe the results of long-term reductions in government staffing at agencies across the Federal government. While the effort was initiated originally to reduce the size of the Federal bureaucracy, government budgets and responsibilities have only continued to increase. In this section, we discuss how recent Federal hiring policies create a less responsive “hollow” Federal government, increasingly run by contractors who outnumber Federal employees by more than a five to one ratio.

When analyzing the impact of hiring policies on the Federal workforce, the most important hiring statistic to monitor is the number of **net new hires**<sup>3</sup> in the “Competitive Service” into the appointment categories called “**Career**” and “**Career Conditional**.”<sup>4</sup> The reason for this is that hires are in what is often referred to as the Career Service—in other words, the core civil service contingent. The strength and bench strength in these two categories determines the strength of the internal workforce. It represents the enduring public servant who is likely to make government service a career, rather than a job. Importantly, these are the people with the ‘corporate history’ and the knowledge base to make things work effectively and execute strategies and plans efficiently. Additionally, these are the people who can deliver the best government for the American people. Without them, the Federal government cannot operate effectively or efficiently or conduct proper oversight of key government functions. Critically important functions such as contractor oversight, acquisition, and human resources management cannot be performed adequately—and waste and escalating costs result.

Unfortunately, the numbers show material losses in the Career Service ranks, particularly in recent years. As seen below, over the last five years, the Federal sector net new hires did not keep pace with the number of quits in that same category, and a net loss of Career Service employees resulted. ***On any given year, over these five years, Career Service new hires represented only 22% to 27% of all new hires into the Government.***

Career & Career Conditional Employee Trends					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
New Hires	55,841	55,749	57,982	63,572	85,425
Quits	95,159	103,974	101,019	104,278	102,830
Difference	(39,318)	(48,225)	(43,037)	(40,706)	(17,405)

<sup>3</sup> The term *net new hires* does not include transfers in from other Federal agencies unless from an Excepted Service position to a Career Service position.

<sup>4</sup> The numbers displayed here, referred to as Competitive Service, include only the Career and Career Conditional appointment categories as reported in the US Office of Personnel Management CPDF data files. All data in this document were obtained using FedScope, the data mart developed and provided on the US Office of Personnel Management website.

<sup>11</sup> Prepared testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Aetna Technologies Corporation *Before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, and The District of Columbia “Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*

Worse, the data on new hires into the Career Service, under the age of 30, show a clear retention problem. New hires in this category show a quit rate that is astonishingly high, wiping out any progress made in building the kind of bench strength that is central to efficient and effective government. Moreover, if this trend continues, it will be virtually impossible for the Federal sector to increase numbers in the core Career Service—much less replenish normal workforce attrition.

New Hires, Permanent Career Service <30 Years of Age					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
New Hires	13,099	12,593	13,144	14,672	19,159
Quits	10,109	12,121	12,532	13,790	13,939
Net Gain Per Year	2,990	472	612	882	5,220

The dominance of hires made in other categories of employment means the workforce is often temporary, and therefore less likely to have the full complement of benefits accrued by Career Service employees—as they remain stuck in a perpetual learning curve. As a result, it is our taxpayers who pay for this constant learning and training and the inefficiencies that are a part of this process.

While it is desirable to have some mobility between the public and private sectors, the current trend is severe and worrisome enough to impact significantly the capabilities of government to manage effectively and execute the President's plans and strategies. For example, even though Congress has approved the President's Economic Stimulus Package, the ability of Federal agencies to immediately begin execution of the plan and to provide proper oversight and accountability will be put to a severe test.

In this particular case, agencies are adopting strategies to employ people on a temporary basis, including the use of reemployed annuitants with offset waivers. The argument is that the funding for these positions is temporary—so the means of filling them should also be temporary. This is a badly flawed concept. Since the level of employment is so high with respect to the transient workforce, this is an excellent time to consider increasing the levels of Career Service. Today, the transient workforce will churn, making room available for long-term career employees. The crucial skills developed in managing this initiative will be retained, providing sustainable support for the Government over years to come.

"The Insourcing Revolution"—the policy of "insourcing" jobs back into the Federal sector—will provide more visible career opportunities for new entrants into the workforce, those under age 30, while providing extensive training and job enrichment to dramatically improve retention.

If the Federal sector wants to improve cost controls, add effective layers of oversight and provide taxpayers with quality services, it must focus on hiring and retaining the Career Service employee. With a total workforce hovering around 1.9 million FTE, providing oversight and direction to a contractor

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workforce estimated to be 10.5 million<sup>5</sup> strong, career employees are essential to effective governance. If this were not true, the Government would not be so focused on hiring back retired employees as reemployed annuitants – who retired from the Career Service and are now deemed essential resources to help make these key strategies work.

### *The Vacancy Backlog – Is There A Hiring Problem?*

As discussed, efforts to stem the growth of the Federal government – while failing to control spending – have succeeded in capping the number of full time Federal employees. In fact, the Federal workforce has flat-lined in terms of growth, showing a 20-year trend of total full-time employee (FTE) allocations capped at right around 1.9 million.<sup>6</sup>

While some may see this as a victory in controlling the size of the Federal bureaucracy, it has really only resulted in an explosion in the government consulting business—as private consultants replace Federal employees.

Using 1981 as the baseline, Government Printing Office (GPO) data shows a total FTE allocation of 2.109 million for the Executive Branch. Since 1981, the Government has been above that baseline only eight times and below it 20 times. Actual employment, however, has been below the mean of 1.969 million FTE allocation on a consistent basis.

In addition, a closer look at the data shows that even when funding for an FTE is allocated, jobs are going unfilled at an alarming rate. Over the last five years, data depicting actual annual employment<sup>7</sup>, as compared to FTE allocations, shows a substantial delta between what was authorized and what was achieved. As a result of the difficulty in aggregating the numbers of funded vacancies, these data points depict a rough estimate as to the delta between on-board head count (referred to here as Total Employment) versus the estimated funding level (referred to here as Total Employment Ceiling).

Employment Trends - All Hires					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Employment - FedScope	1,856,441	1,686,788	1,680,415	1,693,211	1,765,750
Total Employment Ceiling - GPO	1,821,000	1,830,000	1,833,000	1,832,000	1,898,000
Difference	35,441	(143,212)	(152,585)	(138,789)	(132,250)

<sup>5</sup> Congressional Research Service Report, "The Federal Workforce: Characteristics and Trends" Updated September 30, 2008. References "The New True Size of Government" by Paul C. Light, August 2006

<sup>6</sup> FTE refers to Full Time Equivalents. Data here is from the Government Printing Office official website.

<sup>7</sup> The numbers displayed here, referred to as Competitive Service, include only the Career and Career Conditional appointment categories. All data in this document were obtained using FedScope, the data mart developed and provided on the US Office of Personnel Management website.

13 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation *Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia "Uncle Sam Wants You" Recruitment In the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*

Furthermore, adding in the estimated insourcing and Stimulus hiring plus-ups, the gap widens substantially.

Employment Trends - Estimated Vacancy Backlog		
Vacancy Rate & Hiring Backlog	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Insourcing & Projected Stimulus Hiring Plus Ups	100,000	250,000
2008 Exit Backlog	132,250	132,250
Total Estimated Employment Backlog	232,250	382,250

Clearly, agencies have struggled with filling positions. This has resulted in the buildup of a contractor workforce some 10.5 million strong – largely because outsourcing has proven to be a way to get the work done.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, the gap has closed only slightly and many Federal employee positions remain unfilled. Having suffered from cost overruns, lack of control over waste and loss of oversight capacity, the Government is now seeking to insource contractor work and fill these jobs with Federal employees. This is crucial in terms of regaining control over costs, but, at the same time, it is not clear how agencies can fill so many positions quickly.

Workforce attrition in the Federal sector has remained very steady, despite threats of a retirement tsunami. Over the last five years, total attrition<sup>9</sup> has remained consistently between 13% and 15% per year, with separations in the Career Service<sup>10</sup>, where most retirement occur, at between 5% and 6% per year. Actual employment shows a slight increase of 4% in 2008 over 2007, coming off of declining numbers year-over-year from 2004 to 2006 (with a very slight increase of .76% from 2006 to 2007). Overall, total accessions<sup>11</sup> have kept pace with separations at between 13% and 15% per year with a higher rate of 18% in 2008.

Although hiring has kept pace with separations, the rate of hiring has not kept pace with overall authorized staffing levels. Again, in any given year of the last five years, Career Service new hires represented only 22% to 27% of all new hires into the Government. The numbers show a quit rate for Career Service employees significantly greater than the acquisition of new Career Service employees. An ongoing deficit of Career employees erodes continuity of Government and creates internal disparity between employees of various categories—i.e., temporary versus permanent and Career versus non-status employees.

This indicates that Federal hiring has used appointing authorities purported to be easier and more flexible than is common for the types of appointments made to Career Service positions. That said, this shortcut does not bode well for the long term—and compromises the Government's ability to be agile, sustainable and a material contributor to providing services to taxpayers. It also illustrates the point

<sup>8</sup> Congressional Research Service Report, "The Federal Workforce: Characteristics and Trends" Updated September 30, 2008. References "The New True Size of Government" by Paul C. Light, August 2006

<sup>9</sup> Attrition, or separations, is defined to include quits, terminations, retirements, reductions-in-force, and deaths.

<sup>10</sup> The numbers displayed here, referred to as the Career Service, include only the Career and Career Conditional appointment categories as reported in the US Office of Personnel Management CPDF data files. All data in this document were obtained using FedScope, the data mart developed and provided on the US Office of Personnel Management website.

<sup>11</sup> Accessions is a term that includes new hires as well as transfers from one agency to another.

14 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

that, even with more flexible hiring authorities, the rate of hiring has not kept pace with the demand level to fill positions.

The Federal sector continues to lose ground in maintaining a strong Federal Career Service and a responsive and agile workforce and shows that it cannot be responsive to surge requirements that meet the changing conditions nationally or globally. Reliance on awkward hiring authorities that do not adequately meet needs, and often require a force fit, is dangerous and not sustainable.

### *The Federal Hiring Demand-Capacity Gap*

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If insourcing is the answer, how can the Federal government reverse course on employment policy quickly, efficiently and in a cost-effective manner?

Much has been written and said about the “broken” hiring process used by the Federal sector. Jobs going unfilled, lengthy application processes, breakdowns in information security—the list is very, very long.

Many comparisons have been made to private sector HR processes that, in theory, make it easy for applicants to apply for jobs—and some attempts have been made to codify process improvements.<sup>12</sup> But, in actual practice, what makes applying easier for applicants very often bogs-down the Federal hiring process itself.

At first blush, using the same résumé-based hiring process as the private sector should make Federal hiring more efficient. This assumption, however, is flawed upon deeper examination of the crucial differences between Federal and private sector hiring. Perhaps the two most important differences are the regulatory framework for Federal hiring, and the far more significant delegation of authority to line managers in the private sector as opposed to the Federal sector.

In the private sector, the hiring manager has full authority to recruit and assess applicants, make job offers and hire. In the Federal sector, these authorities are restricted within HR – by both regulation and business practice. In the private sector, the substantial delegation to hiring managers means fewer processes are performed by in-house HR staff and, therefore, a more expedient processing of hiring actions. Even in cases where HR facilitates recruitment and performs a perfunctory review of résumés before referring them to the hiring manager, private firms do not approach hiring with the same underlying public policy framework that governs the Federal process.

In contrast, then, the public policy framework that is the infrastructure of the Federal hiring process requires substantial HR staff support. The knowledge level required to expeditiously apply governing regulations requires a significant learning curve and is subject to constant oversight and accountability.

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<sup>12</sup> Reference the recent introduction of S736, The Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act of 2009.

15 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia “Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.



For example, there are some 165 “appointing authorities,”<sup>13</sup> each with a unique set of governing regulations and requirements that applicants must meet. These appointing authorities and governing regulations often support an individualized hiring objective or initiative: Such as employment for returning Peace Corps volunteers, employment of individuals exiting from the National Guard, student employment programs, the Veterans Preference Act or reemploying individuals that had been subjected to Federal reductions-in-force. While many private companies have workforce initiatives as well, they are not required to apply a full set of governing regulations that detail what applicants must possess in order to be hired.

When the Federal government chooses to implement a private sector practice, ostensibly to improve the applicant “experience” in the hiring process, it often results in the addition of process steps inside HR offices to correctly administer the regulations. This ultimately elongates the process. For example, accepting a standard cover letter and résumé from an applicant requires HR staff to solicit more information from that applicant to determine if they possess the necessary “eligibilities”<sup>14</sup> to be appointed to a Government position.

In addition, where structured applications and questionnaires solicit specific information from an applicant to determine whether they meet U.S. Office of Personnel Management minimum qualification requirements (mandatory for Federal positions), a general narrative résumé requires an HR specialist to review and make an assessment or determination as to whether the applicant meets the criteria or not. Further, that process is fraught with peril as the HR specialist is not a subject matter expert in terms of the actual work of the position (except in rare cases). The HR specialist may not understand common terminology or terms of art associated with the profession or craft, or may make interpretations that are highly subjective—and this can make it easy for HR specialists to in effect violate the merit system or introduce disparate treatment of candidates.

In many cases, HR offices introduce standard operating procedures to avoid such situations; but they tend to treat the process as a regulation, making the process more cumbersome and, again, elongating cycle times. In other cases, HR specialists needlessly inject themselves into processes that, similar to the private sector, can be more directly delegated to line managers.

The impact of this “HR dichotomy” is astonishing. In the private sector, the servicing ratio of HR full-time employee (FTE) to total headcount is 1 HR FTE for every 200 workers served.<sup>15</sup> In the Federal sector, the servicing ratio ranges from a low of 1 to 13 to a high of 1 to 119 with a mean of 1:59. This does not, however, include the substantial contractor workforce hired by most Federal HR organizations or Interagency Agreements for cross-servicing, which augments the agency HR workforce as well. For example, in the case of the 1 to 119 ratio, the Department with this ratio has a very substantial and expensive number of HR staff augmentation contracts for HR personnel.

<sup>13</sup> Appointing authorities are the methods by which people are hired or “appointed” to Federal positions. Each has a unique governing set of regulations and “eligibilities” (requirements) which the applicant must meet.

<sup>14</sup> Eligibilities refers to certain criteria an applicant must meet to be considered ‘eligible’ to be appointed under a specific appointing authority. For example, if you were a Peace Corps volunteer within the last 12 months, you are eligible to be appointed or hired under an authority just for returning Peace Corps volunteers.

<sup>15</sup> From a BNA study of 414 private sector HR Departments in June of 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. R. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia “Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

As another example, a Federal agency within that Department has outsourced its HR servicing to a contractor, while maintaining an internal HR headcount of 273 HR staff making it appear to have a servicing ratio of 1:219. But when including its sizable contractor HR workforce, it actually has a servicing ratio of approximately 1:33 – a ratio that still does not include services provided by their Federal payroll provider. This Department’s cost per hire is also four times that of comparable agencies with fully staffed internal operations—and five times greater in total cost of operations.

To successfully navigate the Federal hiring process, and adhere to both the intent and specifics in the regulatory framework, an agency must have enough internal HR capacity to produce the most efficient and effective result. If the agency’s internal HR workforce is under-strength, or demand for HR services is surging against constrained capacity, the agency’s vacancy backlog will build while it struggles to meet demand. When this happens, alongside the lengthy learning curve required to provide expert HR services quickly, the gaps simply cannot be filled expeditiously or effectively.

The chart below illustrates the rough estimate of hiring capacity in Federal HR operations. This does not include contractors engaged in staffing work or agencies cross-servicing other agencies, so the numbers are actually lower than they appear here. What is very worrisome is how low the numbers are. On average, the productivity level is 1 HR FTE for every 10 to 12 new hires *per year*. When looking at the number of Career Service (Career and Career-Conditional<sup>16</sup> appointments), the number is quite low – ranging from 2.5 to 3.5 new hires for every HR Specialist FTE per year. These statistics demonstrate, too, that the number of new hires in jobs that are not in the Career Service are filled at a much higher volume than Career positions – furthering the problems of retention and Government continuity, capability and capacity.

Employment Trends - HR Capacity					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Hiring Capacity Analysis					
Total All New Hires, No Transfers	237,973	236,121	239,531	242,770	304,932
Total Competitive Service Hires Only 1/	55,841	55,749	57,982	63,572	85,425
HR Specialist, GS-201, Hiring Capacity					
GS-201, HR Specialist Employment	22,228	22,650	23,075	23,271	24,624
Hiring Ratio: New Hires Per HR FTE	10.71	10.42	10.38	10.43	12.38
Hiring Ratio: New Career Service Hires Per HR FTE	2.51	2.46	2.51	2.73	3.47

Many attempts have been made to utilize more “flexible” appointing authorities – generally those that have fewer regulatory requirements. But reliance on these appointing authorities can result in the creation of a transient Federal workforce, which undermines the sustainable career civil service cadre that is critical in retaining the knowledge and experience to see the Government through its many transitions. In addition, applicants are under-served because these appointments do not offer the full range of benefits or entitlements that the Career Service receives and fail to offer career ladder opportunities that encourage new hires to stay with Government as a career. Many of these hiring

<sup>16</sup> “Competitive Service” into the appointment categories called “Career” and “Career Conditional”<sup>16</sup> are often referred to as the Career Service – in other words, the core civil service contingent that have permanent positions with the full range of benefits and entitlements.

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actions, thereby, create the unintended consequence of high turnover among the ranks of employees most likely to provide the long-term and crucially important bench strength for the Government.

This illustrates the demand-capacity gap in HR offices throughout the Federal sector. As demand to fill jobs increases with special programs like stimulus hiring and insourcing, the capacity of HR offices must increase to effectively meet demand. Technologies can be a force multiplier, but these technologies can only serve this role if they: (1) use the properly structured application process and eliminate unnecessary process steps, including long narratives that require assessment and interpretation; and (2) track process steps so that metrics can be obtained to create improvements. Finally, Federal agencies need to return to structured hiring and development programs for HR professionals, and OPM needs to support better, more frequent and more labor market sensitive policies and requirements.

### *Conclusion*

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If the Federal sector wants to improve cost controls, add effective layers of oversight and provide taxpayers with quality services, it must focus on hiring and retaining the Career Service employee. The Insourcing Revolution must succeed, because career employees are essential to effective governance. Yet the Federal sector continues to lose ground in maintaining a strong Federal Career Service and a responsive and agile workforce. Moreover, the Federal sector shows that it cannot be responsive to surge requirements that meet the changing conditions nationally or globally. Reliance on contractors and awkward hiring authorities that do adequately meet needs, and often require a force fit, is dangerous and unsustainable.

Put simply, the best government is the best government. Our nation needs a professional class of career civil servants who can effectively and efficiently manage Federal programs. Insourcing must be the focus of Federal government recruiting and retention efforts. Let the Insourcing Revolution begin.

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18 Prepared testimony of testimony of Linda E. B. Rix, Co-Chief Executive Officer, Avue Technologies Corporation *Before the Subcommittee on Oversight Of Government Management, The Federal Workforce, And The District Of Columbia "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*

BACKGROUND  
UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU! RECRUITMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
MAY 7, 2009

**Background**

This is the first in what is expected to be a series of hearings on the broken recruitment and hiring process in the federal government. There is a pressing need to fix the federal recruitment and hiring process. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) reports that the average age of a federal employee is 49 years old, and over the next five years, approximately one-third of the federal workforce, or 600,000 employees, are expected to retire. According to OPM, there currently are more than 47,000 federal vacancies. OPM estimates that in the next two years federal agencies will need to hire close to 200,000 new federal employees to fill critical needs staffing areas, not including additional hires to support the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.<sup>1</sup>

Conditions are favorable for the federal government to attract many highly-qualified applicants. During his inaugural address, President Obama called for “a renewed spirit of national service for this and future generations,” and many who did not previously consider federal employment may be doing so now. In addition, high unemployment – 9 percent nationwide in March 2009 compared to 5.2 percent in March 2008 – may increase the attractiveness of federal employment across a range of occupations.

OPM is responsible for developing strategic human resources policies government-wide. In the past, OPM has invested in federal career fairs around the country and television advertisements that promote federal jobs. However, federal agencies primarily are responsible for conducting their own recruitment. The majority of federal agencies use the website USAjobs.com to advertise open positions, but they conduct little proactive outreach to potential applicant pools. According to a report by the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) on hiring skilled workers, more new hires relied on networking than the USAjobs.com website to learn about job opportunities in the federal government,<sup>2</sup> which suggests that posting vacancies on USAjobs.com is not the most effective method for recruitment.

According to a fall 2005 survey of college students by the Partnership for Public Service (the Partnership), the federal government’s biggest problem in attracting college graduates was not a lack of interest in federal service, but a lack of knowledge about federal jobs and how to apply

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Director John Berry on April 21, 2009, the Subcommittee Chairman and Ranking Member requested information from OPM on the total number of new hires expected in the federal government due to the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. To date, OPM has not responded.

<sup>2</sup> *Attracting the Next Generation: A Look at Federal Entry-level New Hires*, A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States by the Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, Perspectives, January 2008.

for them.<sup>3</sup> This finding points to the need for federal agencies to reexamine how to attract younger workers, for example 18-29 year olds or “millennials,” who have an interest in meaningful careers related to public service.

To examine this issue further, the Partnership and OPM launched a *Call to Serve Initiative* in 2005. *Call to Serve* partnered 615 schools with 75 federal agencies and required the schools to commit to educate their students about career opportunities in the federal civil service. In their October 2007 report evaluating *Call to Serve* entitled *Making a Difference: A Blueprint for Matching University Students with Federal Opportunities*, the Partnership found that “cost-effective recruiting efforts can make a difference on college campuses.” The use of low-cost marketing tools such as email notifications, federal recruitment visits by agency employees, and schools hiring a part-time or graduate student to focus on promoting federal career opportunities increased overall interest in federal careers by an average of 12 percent at five participating pilot schools.

The Partnership’s report had seven other key findings that would be helpful for federal agencies to improve their own recruitment efforts among young workers:

- Exposure can raise student awareness and improve perceptions of federal employment. It also can encourage action;
- The more students know about federal service, the more they like it;
- Technology plus person-to-person follow-up is an invaluable tool for driving action;
- The knowledge gap about federal service extends beyond students to include faculty and staff, and closing this gap is key to sustainability;
- Effective strategies do not have to be expensive;
- The best message and messenger vary from campus to campus so be aware of your audience; and
- Inspiration and process matter.

In addition providing more information about federal employment to potential applicant pools, the federal government needs to make the hiring process more user-friendly. MSPB released a report in January 2008 entitled *Attracting the Next Generation: A Look at Federal Entry-level New Hires*. The report found that federal new hires tend to be a little older and have more experience (averaging 33 years old with 1-5 years experience) than entry-level hires in other industries. The report concluded that this was a direct result of “recruitment and assessment practices agencies use that often favor older applicants who have more experience over younger applicants who may have more potential.”

New employees were surveyed for this report on the process of entry into federal service, how they first learned about their federal job, and what the greatest obstacles they faced to the federal hiring process. Most notably, the number one answer for 30 percent of those surveyed indicated that the greatest obstacle to the hiring process was the length of the process.

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<sup>3</sup> *Back to School: Rethinking Federal Recruiting on College Campuses*, Partnership for Public Service, May 2006.

The MSPB made five general recommendations for federal agencies to:

- Use more predictive applicant assessment tools;
- Use a balanced set of recruitment strategies that promote fair and open competition;
- Market what is important;
- Evaluate the agency hiring process to ensure there are no unnecessary obstacles; and
- Avoid stereotyping applicants based on generational assumptions.

#### **Human Resources Workforce**

One of the other potential problems in the recruitment process is the capacity of the federal human resources workforce. According to OPM, the federal civilian human resources workforce declined by 20 percent from 1991-1998 and took with it significant expertise and institutional knowledge. Since then, the human resources workforce has made marginal gains, but mostly remains stagnant. There was an expectation that those positions would be replaced by streamlined processes, technological advancements, and new regulations, but those advances never came together.<sup>4</sup> According to a survey of federal HR executives in 2000 by OPM, 94 percent indicated that there was a critical skills gap in the HR workforce. Since then, the Chief Human Capital Officers Council has brought greater attention to the need for improved training for human resources professionals in federal agencies, but there has been little impact.

As the Partnership's 2006 issue brief on the federal HR workforce points out, "Federal HR professionals have a disproportionately large impact on the rest of the federal workforce, and an investment in attracting and developing highly skilled HR employees will pay enormous dividends in improved organizational effectiveness. We must invest in the federal HR workforce today in order to have a first class federal government tomorrow."

#### **May 2008 Hearing on Recruitment and Hiring Process**

On May 8, 2008, the OGM Subcommittee held a hearing on the federal recruitment and hiring process entitled, "From Candidates to Changemakers: Recruiting and Hiring the Next Generation of Federal Employees." The hearing explored issues related to the broken recruitment and hiring process. The Subcommittee heard testimony from OPM, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, MSPB, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), federal employee unions, the Partnership, Hewitt Associates, and Virilion, a marketing firm specializing in online audiences.

Witnesses presented their views on the problems with the current federal recruitment and hiring processes and offered recommendations for improvement. GAO identified many challenges with the federal recruitment and hiring process, highlighting the following as problem areas:

- Passive recruitment strategies;
- Poor and insufficient workforce planning;
- Unclear job vacancy announcements;

<sup>4</sup> The Federal HR Workforce, Issue Brief PPS-06-03, Partnership for Public Service, May 31, 2006, <http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/publications/viewcontentdetails.php?id=44>.

- Time-consuming and paperwork-intensive manual processes;
- Imprecise candidate assessment tools; and
- Ineffective use of existing hiring flexibilities.

In its testimony, GAO stated, “These problems put the federal government at a serious competitive disadvantage in acquiring talent. For example, passive recruitment strategies, such as infrequent or no outreach to college campuses, miss opportunities to expose potential employees to information about federal jobs. Unclear and unfriendly vacancy announcements can cause confusion for applicants, delay hiring, and serve as poor recruiting tools. Weak candidate assessment tools can inadequately predict future job performance and result in the hiring of individuals who do not fully possess the appropriate skills for the job.”<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Dan Solomon, the Chief Executive Officer of Virilion, laid out the challenge before federal agencies in recruiting the next generation saying, “younger people are a difficult group to reach and engage...bottom line: people are looking for jobs are online and the government needs to be there to attract the best.”<sup>6</sup>

In response to the Subcommittee hearing and recommendations from witnesses, OPM developed an *End to End Hiring Roadmap* initiative that includes strategic workforce planning, recruitment, hiring, security and suitability, new employee orientation, and measurements of effectiveness.<sup>7</sup> Since then, OPM has been training human capital officers at federal agencies on the requirements of the *Roadmap* and plans to have the training done by the end of 2009.

#### **Legislation**

To address the recruitment and hiring challenges in the federal government, Congress has approved a variety of workforce flexibilities. Congress passed the Federal Student Loan Assistance Act in 2003, which gave agencies the authority to provide student loan repayments of up to \$10,000 per year and \$60,000 in aggregate to federal employees who commit to at least three years of service.<sup>8</sup> In 2002, Congress passed legislation that provided federal agencies the authority to use category rating and direct hire authority.<sup>9</sup>

On March 30, 2009, Senators Akaka and Voinovich introduced S. 736, the Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act of 2009, to help agencies address their broken recruitment and hiring processes. The bill would incorporate some of the provisions in the *End to End Hiring Roadmap*

<sup>5</sup> *Human Capital, Transforming Federal Recruiting and Hiring Efforts*, (GAO-08-762T), the Government Accountability Office, May 8, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Statement of Dan Solomon, before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, May 8, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Office of Personnel Management, *End-to-End Hiring Initiative*, [www.opm.gov/staffingportal/EndToEndRoadmap.asp](http://www.opm.gov/staffingportal/EndToEndRoadmap.asp).

<sup>8</sup> P.L. 108-123.

<sup>9</sup> Homeland Security Act of 2002 P.L. 107-296.

and as well as suggestions from the Partnership for Public Service. Specifically, the bill would require agencies to:

- Develop strategic workforce plans, including hiring projections and critical skills gaps in the workforce;
- Post brief, clear, and concise job announcements using plain writing requirements;
- Allow applicants to submit resumes and cover letters, and no longer require knowledge, skills, and abilities essays;
- Provide timely notification to applicants of the status of their application;
- Take no more than 80 days from the time a managers decides to fill a vacancy to the time an offer is made;
- Keep an inventory of all applicants who elect to be considered for other federal jobs; and
- Measure the effectiveness of hiring efforts and reforms.

### Resources

- *In Search of Highly Skilled Workers: A Study on the Hiring of Upper Level Employees From Outside the Federal Government*, a Report to the President and the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, Perspectives, February 2008.
- *Attracting the Next Generation: A Look at Federal Entry-level New Hires*, a Report to the President and the Congress of the United States by the Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, Perspectives, January 2008.
- *Reforming Federal Hiring Practices: Beyond Faster and Cheaper*, a Report to the President and the Congress of the United States by the U.S. Merit System Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluations, Perspectives, June 2006.
- *Back to School: Rethinking Federal Recruiting on College Campuses*, Partnership for Public Service, May 2006.
- *Human Capital: Status of Efforts to Improve Federal Hiring*, Testimony of J. Christopher Mihm, Government Accountability Office, before the Subcommittee on Civil Service, Agency Organization, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives, June 7, 2004 GAO-04-796T.
- *Human Capital: Increasing Agencies' Use of New Hiring Flexibilities*, (GAO-04-959T), Testimony of J, Christopher Mihm, Government Accountability Office before the Subcommittee on Civil Service, Agency Organization, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives, July 13, 2004.
- "Parsing the Fine Print on Federal Ads," Mary Ellen Slayter, [The Washington Post](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/03/AR2007110300205.html), November 4, 2007, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/03/AR2007110300205.html>.





## National Council on Disability

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An independent federal agency making recommendations to the President and Congress to enhance the quality of life for all Americans with disabilities and their families.

May 13, 2009

The Honorable Daniel Akaka, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,  
the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia  
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable George Voinovich, Acting Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,  
the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia  
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
350 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Akaka and Ranking Member Voinovich:

I am writing to you on behalf of the National Council on Disability (NCD), an independent federal agency, to submit for the record the executive summary of our recently released paper entitled "*Federal Employment of People with Disabilities*." We make this submission in reference to the May 7, 2009 subcommittee hearing entitled "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government."

NCD is composed of 15 members, appointed by the President, with the consent of the U.S. Senate, and a staff that supports the Council's work. The purpose of NCD is to promote policies, programs, practices, and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all individuals with disabilities, and that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and integration into all aspects of society. To accomplish this, we gather stakeholder input, review federal programs and legislation, and provide advice to the President, Congress and governmental agencies. Much of this advice comes from timely reports and papers NCD releases throughout each year.

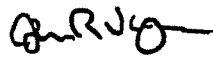
In light of the topic matter of last Thursday's hearing on recruitment in the federal government, we respectfully submit a summary of our recent paper on the federal employment of people with disabilities to focus additional attention on one segment of the federal workforce that has been steadily declining in numbers over the last ten years to just under one percent (0.92%). The executive summary of that report follows.

The Council commends your leadership in bringing attention to this critically important topic, both through this hearing as well as through introduction of S. 736, the Federal Hiring Process Improvement Act. S. 736 offers a timely solution to many of the problems long-identified as barriers to the federal hiring process. We especially laud Section 9 of S. 736 which requires that agencies measure and collect information on indicators of hiring effectiveness and includes the use and impact of special hiring authorities to recruit diverse candidates, including individuals with disabilities.

In our paper, NCD recommends that the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) include data on employees with disabilities. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has the responsibility to report annually to Congress on progress under the FEORP, and while OPM must report on the representation of minorities within the Federal Government, it does not include data on employees with disabilities. NCD believes that reporting requirements for employees with disabilities should be on par with other represented groups.

If you have any questions about this submission or any matter related to disability policy, please contact NCD Executive Director Michael Collins at (202) 272-2004, or email at [mcollins@ncd.gov](mailto:mcollins@ncd.gov). On behalf of NCD, thank you again for your leadership in focusing attention on this important topic. I also thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Vaughn".

John R. Vaughn  
Chairperson

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# Federal Employment of People with Disabilities



National Council on Disability  
March 31, 2009

**Federal Employment for People with Disabilities****National Council on Disability  
March 31, 2009**National Council on Disability  
1331 F Street, NW, Suite 850  
Washington, DC 20004**Read full report at:**[http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2009/Federal\\_Employment\\_of\\_People\\_with\\_Disabilities.doc](http://www.ncd.gov/newsroom/publications/2009/Federal_Employment_of_People_with_Disabilities.doc)**Executive Summary**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the status of employment of people with disabilities in the Federal Government and to make recommendations for improving federal hiring and advancement of employees with disabilities. The paper summarizes the legal authorities and policy guidance, the responsibilities of various federal agencies charged with ensuring equal opportunity in federal employment, barriers to hiring and advancement, provisions for reasonable accommodations, and agency initiatives.

The National Council on Disability has determined that despite laws, regulations, policy guidance, and excepted service hiring authorities designed to promote federal employment opportunities for people with disabilities, barriers to federal employment remain, and the number of employees with disabilities in the federal workforce is low.

**Summary of the Status of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government**

- **Total workforce.** The Federal Government employed 23,969 people with targeted disabilities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007, which was 0.92 percent of its total workforce of 2,608,172. From FY 1998 to FY 2007, the total workforce increased by 128,973 employees, a net change of 5.20 percent. However, the number of federal employees with targeted disabilities<sup>i</sup> decreased from 28,035 in FY 1998 to 23,993 in FY 2007, a net loss of 14.42 percent.<sup>ii</sup>

- **Agencies employing people with disabilities.** Among agencies with 500 or more employees, those with the highest percentage of people with targeted disabilities are Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) (2.65 percent, or 58 employees); Social Security Administration (2.06 percent, or 1,288 employees); Defense Finance and Accounting Service (2.03 percent, or 253 employees); and Defense Logistics Agency (1.89 percent, or 404 employees).<sup>iii</sup> Among Cabinet-level agencies, five have participation rates greater than 1 percent: Treasury (1.70 percent, or 1,748 employees); Veterans Affairs (1.48 percent, or 3,756 employees); Education (1.36 percent, or 59 employees); Housing and Urban Development (1.31 percent, or 126 employees); and Labor (1.25 percent, or 193 employees).<sup>iv</sup>
- **Separation rate.** Increasing the number of employees with disabilities in the Federal Government is made more difficult by the fact that employees with targeted disabilities leave the Federal Government at nearly twice their rate of hire. In FY 2006, there were 1,298 new hires with targeted disabilities, while 2,096 employees with targeted disabilities left the Federal Government. In other words, employees with targeted disabilities accounted for 0.55 percent of total new hires but 0.92 percent of separations.<sup>v</sup> Therefore, to increase the overall participation rate, it is necessary to hire at a rate that exceeds the separation rate and to find ways to reduce the separation rate.
- **Supervisors.** In FY 2007, employees with targeted disabilities made up 0.49 percent of the 50,038 first-level managers (GS-12 level or below); 0.49 percent of the 65,792 mid-level managers (GS-13 or GS-14); and 0.43 percent of the 38,837 senior-level managers (GS-15 or Senior Executive Service).<sup>vi</sup>
- **Senior Executive Service.** The Senior Executive Service (SES) is a separate personnel system covering a majority of the top managerial, supervisory, and policymaking positions in the executive branch. In FY 2007, the SES had 7,720 members; only 35 (0.45 percent) were people with targeted disabilities.<sup>vii</sup> Government-wide, the representation of career SES members reporting targeted disabilities declined from 0.52 percent in FY 2000 to 0.44 percent in FY 2007.<sup>viii</sup>

- **Schedule A** is a hiring authority that allows for noncompetitive appointment of people with targeted disabilities; it is designed to remove barriers and increase employment opportunities. However, the Schedule A hiring authority for people with disabilities is underutilized. In FY 2006, 237,612 new employees were hired by the Federal Government, but only 326 (0.14 percent) of the 1,298 new hires with disabilities were hired under Schedule A.<sup>ix</sup>
- **Top management commitment.** Lack of top management commitment to hiring people with disabilities is evident. In FY 2005, only 15.8 percent of the agencies with 1,000 or more employees established a numerical goal for increasing the employment of people with targeted disabilities, even though these goals are required by EEOC Management Directive 715.<sup>x</sup>
- **Harassment.** Since FY 2002, harassment has been the most frequently alleged issue in complaints of discrimination filed by employees on the basis of mental or physical disability. In FY 2006, harassment accounted for 38.1 percent of the 1,130 complaints based on mental disability and 30.5 percent of the 3,843 complaints based on physical disability. Other frequently alleged complaints involved reasonable accommodation or discipline issues.<sup>xi</sup>

**Opportunities.** Recognition of continuing barriers to federal employment has led to some promising solutions that create opportunities for agencies seeking qualified workers and for persons with disabilities seeking employment with the Federal Government.

- The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Partnership for Public Service estimate that about 550,000 federal employees will leave the government in the next five years, the majority through retirement. OPM has estimated that of the 956,613 employees who are eligible to retire through FY 2016, a predicted 586,339 employees (61.3 percent) will retire during that period.<sup>xii</sup> These retirements will create a significant number of job opportunities.

- A survey of senior executive officers conducted in 2008 confirmed OPM projections of high turnover among the senior ranks in the near future: 41.6 percent of career respondents plan to leave in the next three years, and 62 percent plan to do so in the next five years. A majority (66 percent) of those planning to leave in the next year are under age 60.<sup>xiii</sup> The need to replenish the senior ranks provides an opportunity for advancement and calls for new approaches to attract employees with the requisite skills to fill these vacancies.
- The Partnership for Public Service issued a report summarizing the Federal Government's most critical hiring needs through September 2009 by agency, occupation, and skills.<sup>xiv</sup> This report provides applicants with disabilities information on where job opportunities are, which agencies proactively recruit people with disabilities, and which agencies rate highly as best places to work. By 2009, federal agencies project hiring nearly 193,000 new workers for mission-critical jobs.
- Call to Serve, a joint initiative between the Partnership for Public Service and the OPM, is dedicated to helping students learn more about internships and careers in the Federal Government. Participating agencies facilitate recruitment and retention of younger members of the federal workforce and communicate with the campus coordinators in the network to provide guidance on how students can find information about and pursue jobs in federal service.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the current status of people with disabilities in the Federal Government, 10 recommendations were developed. Five recommendations address the need for the Office of Personnel Management to examine personnel practices that continue to be barriers to hiring and advancing qualified people with disabilities. Four recommendations call on Congress to request the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct studies on Schedule A, supervisor practices, and the veterans' preference system; and to expand the authority of the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program. One recommendation is for job seekers, encouraging people with disabilities to take

advantage of the information available on opportunities in the Federal Government. These recommendations will address current barriers and promote opportunities for federal employment.

***Recommendations for the Office of Personnel Management***

1. **Reduce the two-year probationary period for employees with disabilities under Schedule A to one year.** With the exception of the Federal Career Intern Program (which requires a two-year training period) and the Veterans Recruitment Appointment excepted service authority (which requires a two-year probationary period), new hires in the Federal Government are subject to a one-year probationary period. Reducing the two-year probationary period required for people with disabilities who are hired under Schedule A to one year will bring Schedule A hires into parity with other new hires.
2. **Require the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program to include data on employees with disabilities.** OPM has the responsibility to report annually to Congress on progress under the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program. The report is prepared in compliance with the law<sup>xv</sup> and contains information on the representation of minorities within the Federal Government and best practices of federal agencies; however, it does not include data on employees with disabilities. The reporting requirements for employees with disabilities should be on par with other represented groups.
3. **Establish mandatory training on targeted disabilities for all supervisors within Federal Government agencies.** The training should be overseen and delivered by the agency's senior training cadre who are full-time federal employees. There are several resources that can help supervisors and hiring managers recruit and hire applicants with disabilities, lessening one of the barriers to employment.



4. **Conduct a marketing campaign to encourage applicants with disabilities.**  
The marketing campaign should be aimed at erasing any negative perceptions of being a federal employee with a disability and accentuate the positive aspects of federal employment. This marketing approach is particularly important given the impending retirement of a large percentage of the federal workforce in the near future and the need to fill these vacancies.
  
5. **Conduct a study of best practices in the Federal Government and develop a model program for hiring, retaining, and advancing people with disabilities.**  
A few agencies, with visible commitment from top leadership, have developed innovative practices to encourage hiring, retaining, and advancing people with disabilities. However, information on these practices is not readily available on agency Web sites and therefore is not widely known. There is a need to identify and promote successful practices for conducting effective outreach, hiring qualified candidates, establishing efficient programs for providing accommodations, and providing opportunities for promotion, including advancement to the Senior Executive Service. A study of best practices would recognize innovative agency practices, use those practices to develop a model program, and encourage other agencies to adopt those practices. This study could be based on the study of best practices in state governments conducted by EEOC.<sup>xvi</sup>

***Recommendations for Congress***

6. **Request that the Government Accountability Office examine Schedule A employment for people with disabilities.** EEOC has determined that the Schedule A hiring authority for people with disabilities is underutilized.<sup>xvii</sup> A comprehensive study of the Schedule A hiring authority for people with disabilities would determine why agencies are not using this authority so the requisite training and initiatives could be instituted to increase its use.

7. **Request that the Government Accountability Office conduct a survey of federal supervisors.** It has been eight years since the President's Task Force conducted the study of federal agency supervisors and managers about accommodation and employment of persons with disabilities in the federal sector. Since supervisors have a responsibility to protect the rights of employees with disabilities, it is important to determine whether they have the necessary knowledge to carry out that responsibility and to determine where further training is needed. Conducting the survey again will document progress and identify areas that need improvement.
8. **Request that the Government Accountability Office study the effectiveness of the preference system for veterans with disabilities.** This study should investigate the avenues for recourse if the veteran is not awarded the preference. It may be useful to determine whether this system has significantly reduced barriers to employment for veterans with disabilities and to identify best practices that can be translated to Schedule A appointments of employees with disabilities.
9. **Grant the Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) the authority to include accommodations such as job structuring, telecommuting, and job-sharing.** While electronic accommodations make federal employment accessible for employees with disabilities, an entire package of accommodations should be available to employees whose agencies have CAP partnerships. CAP has done an excellent job of providing assistive technology to federal employees and would be a logical place to house the expertise needed to provide support to supervisors who may not be familiar with job structuring, telecommuting, and job-sharing arrangements.

***Recommendation for Job Seekers***

10. **Investigate employment opportunities in agencies with critical hiring needs and agencies that have shown a commitment to hiring people with**

**disabilities.** For example, almost 80 percent of projected new hires will be in five professional fields: security, protection, compliance and enforcement; medical and public health; accounting, budget, and business; engineering and sciences; and program management/analysis and administration. Among agencies with 500 or more employees, those with the highest percentage of people with targeted disabilities in FY 2007 were Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2.65 percent of a workforce of 2,192); Social Security Administration (2.06 percent of a workforce of 62,407); Defense Finance and Accounting Service (2.03 percent of a workforce of 12,449); Defense Logistics Agency (1.89 percent of a workforce of 21,394); and Department of the Treasury (1.70 percent of a workforce of 102,787).

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<sup>i</sup> Targeted disabilities are disabilities that the Federal Government, as a matter of policy, has identified for special emphasis. The targeted disabilities are deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, convulsive disorders, mental retardation, mental illness, and distortion of limb and/or spine. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2008), *Annual Report on the Federal Workforce, FY 2007*.

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), (2008, August), *Annual Report on the Federal Workforce, FY 2007*, Table A-6. [www.eeoc.gov/federal/fsp2007](http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/fsp2007). Accessed Feb. 5, 2009.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 7.

<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 8.

<sup>v</sup> EEOC, (2008, January), *Improving the Participation Rate of People with Targeted Disabilities in the Federal Workforce*, p. 19. <http://eeoc.gov/federal/report/pwtd.html>. Accessed Feb. 5, 2009.

<sup>vi</sup> EEOC. (2008, August), p. II-4.

<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*, Table A-6a.

<sup>viii</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), (2008, November 26), *Diversity in the Federal SES and Processes for Selecting New Executives*, GAO-09-110. [www.gao.gov/new.items/d09110.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09110.pdf). Accessed Feb. 5, 2009.

<sup>ix</sup> EEOC, (2008, January), Table 5.

<sup>x</sup> EEOC, (2008, January).

<sup>xi</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xii</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), (2008, March), *An Analysis of Federal Employee Retirement Data: Predicting Future Retirements and Examining Factors*

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*Relevant to Retiring from the Federal Service.*

[www.opm.gov/feddata/RetirementPaperFinal\\_v4.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/feddata/RetirementPaperFinal_v4.pdf). Accessed Feb. 5, 2009.

<sup>xiii</sup> OPM, (2008, May), *Senior Executive Service Survey Results*.

[www.opm.gov/ses/SES\\_survey\\_results\\_complete.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/ses/SES_survey_results_complete.pdf). Accessed Feb. 5, 2009.

<sup>xiv</sup> Partnership for Public Service, (2007, July), *Where the Jobs Are: Mission-Critical Opportunities for America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Washington, DC.

[www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/publications/viewcontentdetails.php?id=118](http://www.ourpublicservice.org/OPS/publications/viewcontentdetails.php?id=118). Accessed Feb. 5, 2009.

<sup>xv</sup> 5 U.S.C. §720; 5 C.F.R. Part 720, Subpart B.

<sup>xvi</sup> EEOC, (2005, October 31), *Best Practices for the Employment of People with Disabilities in State Government: Final Report*.

[www.eeoc.gov/initiatives/nfi/final\\_states\\_best\\_practices\\_report.pdf](http://www.eeoc.gov/initiatives/nfi/final_states_best_practices_report.pdf). Accessed Feb. 5, 2009.

<sup>xvii</sup> EEOC, (2008, January), Table 5.



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On behalf of the Project Management Institute (PMI), it is our privilege to submit testimony as part of the hearing, "Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government." We are grateful to the Chairman, Senator Akaka and the Ranking Member, Senator Voinovich, for scheduling this hearing and bringing the human capital needs of the federal workforce to light.

PMI is a non-profit professional organization that advocates for its members and credential holders trained as project managers throughout the world. We currently have nearly 500,000 members and credential holders in 175 countries including over 711 in Hawaii and 12,800 in Ohio. We are recognized as the global leader in project management; our credentials and standards are recognized and requested throughout the world by industry and governments.

Project management is a defined professional skill set, which effectively, "initiates, plans, executes, controls, and closes" projects. In addition, program management uses these skills and others to manage groups of distinct efforts under a specified program. Finally, portfolio management looks at the strategies of the organization and determines what are the best projects and programs to ensure success of the organization's goals. Together, we refer to these three disciplines as project management.

#### **The Need For Project Managers**

We believe this hearing could not be timelier. The expected retirements of the baby-boomer generation will put a significant strain on the existing workforce particularly since that generation's institutional knowledge and skills must transfer to a new generation of employees. In addition, President Obama has promised to cut programs that are not performing and is expecting results from those programs where strategic investments have been made. A workforce sufficiently trained in project and program management provides an opportunity to achieve those goals, allowing the government to do more with the resources it has.

This hearing is also timely because, recent research reports show that half of all projects fail due to no or poor project management. An OMB survey entitled the "CIO Council Information Technology Workforce Capability Assessment," found respondents did not believe their project management skills were sufficient or being improved. Project management education was identified as the top need by those who manage projects extensively and the second most important need by those managing projects moderately.

Focusing on recruiting, retaining and training certified project managers will help the federal government in four specific ways. First, project management by its nature creates transparency and accountability. Second, project management helps organizations save money and gives leaders better decision-making information about programs and projects that should be continued. Third, project management is the



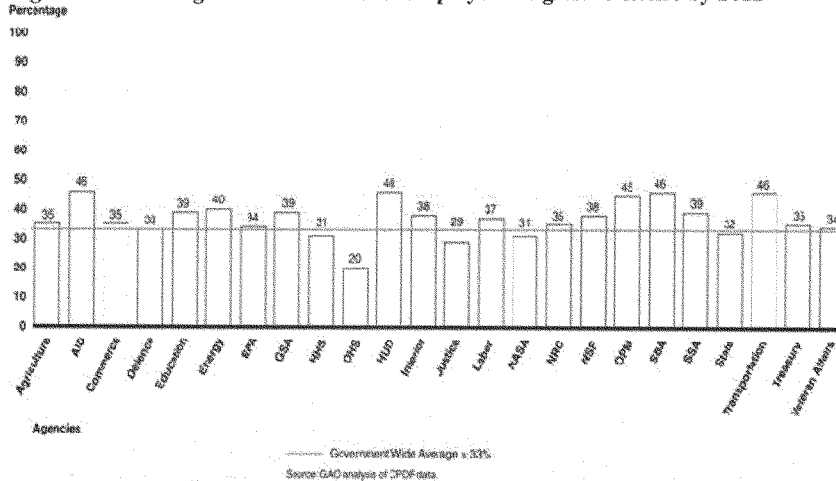
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discipline of *execution*: of moving from strategy to reliable performance through systematic planning, review and feedback, delivering consistent results within the time and budget constraints prevalent in government. Fourth, government can also benefit by increased competitiveness in the recruitment and retention of qualified project and program managers. Those who are trained as project managers will be incentivized to remain in government knowing their skills are valued and they are given opportunities for growth.

**Skills Gap Coming**

The chart below, produced by the Government Accountability Office, shows the percent of agency personnel eligible to retire within the next 4 years. Across the government the average is 33%, but agencies like USAID, HUD, the SBA and Transportation have nearly half their workforces eligible for retirement. Many of these agencies, like USAID, HUD and Transportation deal with major projects.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Career Federal Employees Eligible to Retire by 2012**



These retirees are the “baby boomers” many of whom entered the federal work force in the 1970’s and who have carried the burden of leadership throughout the government for more than three decades, and sometimes longer. When they retire, the knowledge they take with them and the human capital they embody will need to be replaced. With the heavy emphasis on outsourcing, government contracting and privatization of government activities, that storehouse of knowledge may not be replaceable, at least not without improving management systems and performance goals through rigorous project management.



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### **Worker Retention**

Another human capital challenge along with the retirements is ensuring that the federal government operates in a climate that fosters worker retention. Competitive pay and surety of advancement are clearly important for worker retention, but so is movement upward and laterally. There are few job classifications that transcend agencies, impeding the ability of workers to identify opportunities for employment in government. Even if there are transcendent job classifications, the roles and responsibilities of that job vary widely and may well have differing pay scales. For example, the position of a project manager is a sub-classification in a number of different jobs. In some civilian agencies there is no project manager position at all. The Defense Department has the Defense Acquisition Workforce Investment Act (DWIA), which outlines specific requirements as do many acquisition personnel. This structure makes finding a job in the federal government cumbersome for those who are qualified and results in government agencies competing against each other for talent.

### **Competing for talent with the private sector**

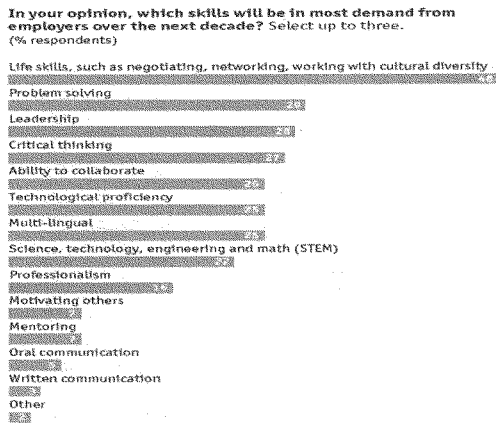
There is ample precedent for believing that the government must focus on recruiting and retaining project and program managers. Fortune 500 companies and the most successful organizations around the globe have learned that employing project management techniques and creating a culture focused on project management is vital to achieving business success.

In a survey commissioned by Cisco there was clear evidence that the business world, wants and believes it needs to be more involved in influencing the curriculum, especially at the collegiate and graduate school levels. It is likely government will need the same skills. Government can position itself as the employer of choice for people with



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those skills coming out of college. The Cisco survey findings are below.



What is so interesting about these findings is that these are the skills of project management. These are the skills of knowing how to understand what an organization needs strategically and then being able to translate the need into actual change, actual innovation, and actual results. Project management is the science of execution, the ability to think critically, adapt, motivate, build teams, assess risk and most importantly deliver, deliver the very results that provide strategic benefit to the organization.

When talking about the topic of project management, executives and Congressional decision-makers typically think of acquisitions or IT. The use of and need for project management skills goes much further, beyond basic acquisitions or procurement undertakings and does not solely reside within the IT departments of agencies. Project managers are integral parts of all agencies in all levels. Project managers are asked to manage considerable efforts often times with little training and undefined authority. Project managers most often are responsible for spending and overseeing projects exceeding \$100 million of taxpayer money. For organizations these are very important people and their skills are highly valued.

The government has an upper hand now to recruit people with these skills. There are a significant number of exciting positions open and opening in the near future. Government service provides the opportunity to work on exciting projects and the popularity of public service is very high. However, there must be efforts to ensure that the government does not simply train people and give them experience to see them leave government and join the private sector. Our suggestions for modifications to the project management workforce of the government will go a long way towards making those goals a reality.





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### **Congress Must Act Decisively**

Congress required project management competencies for acquisitions personnel in government in PL 108-136, the Service Acquisition Reform Act. As a result, OMB developed FAC-P/PM. The purpose of the FAC-P/PM is to establish general training and experience requirements for program and project managers in civilian agencies and to focus on essential competencies that are needed by these positions. The Federal Acquisitions Institute aligned many of the requirements of FAC-P/PM with PMI's credentials. Other agencies in the federal government are moving towards the adoption of project management standards as well. We believe these efforts by Congress were appropriate and should be modified and expanded throughout government.

Certified project managers bring real skills to the federal government. Individuals with the Project Management Professional (PMP®) or Program Management Professional (PgMP®) credential have been given an accreditation which demonstrates their knowledge and ability to schedule projects, manage risk, manage costs, conduct earned value evaluations, manage human capital, and communicate with stakeholders. These are critical skills to getting the right job done correctly, in less time and with lower costs.

### **PMI's Proposal for the Federal Workforce**

The federal government's project and program management community consists of people who oversee budget authorities of approximately \$2.55 trillion dollars. According to a 2008 report by the Council on Excellence in Government, a large portion of those people do not have any certification in project or program management, while about half said they never received any training in project or program management at all. This problem can be solved.

It is fully within the power of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to set a new standard when hiring for project and program managers. Specifically, they can create a unique job classification for project and program managers. The job classification should be portable across government, allowing project managers to transfer agencies or departments if there is a need or desire. This will significantly improve the recruitment of project and program managers for several reasons. Searching USAjobs.com will be simpler; it will be easy to identify the skills required for the position and give human capital officers the ability to design recruitment programs around those positions when visiting with prospective college students or at career fairs. Project managers will also have a clearer understanding of their role and position in government. Further, they will understand their lines of reporting and can be held accountable.



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The government can also help itself retain its project managers if there is a career path for continued development. Project managers want to be challenged and have room to grow in their profession managing larger and more complex projects. Building a career track will provide a clear way to do it, complete with prerequisites, skill development, and success metrics. A career path should include an apprenticeship program to promote knowledge sharing and provide younger project managers with access to senior management – improving lines of communication. A career path would include the formal job classification and benchmarks for becoming an agency project, program and portfolio manager.

PMI has developed a career framework, PathPro®, for use by organizations that identifies job definitions, skills, competencies, job titles, job descriptions, project profiles, proficiency assessments, career paths, and reporting capabilities necessary to build a career path for each level of project, program and portfolio management. This tool can be used at no charge by OPM and federal agencies in developing career paths within their organizations.

We also have several recommendations for best practices and training. These recommendations will also reduce waste and fraud, increase transparency and demonstrate that the government is working. Our recommendations include:

- Through OPM and OMB adopt globally recognized project management standards for use throughout the federal government.
- Allow agencies to pay for external certification of their project managers.
- Require project management as part of one of the five core criteria within the Senior Executive Service (SES) Program.

### **Conclusion**

We look forward to working with the subcommittee and the Obama Administration to implement our proposal. We can assist in establishing a framework for the career path and networking with experienced project managers to bring them into government. In addition, PMI can provide and identify the basic best practices our members and credential holders have proven the ability to execute.

The American people want good results from their government. We believe increased use of project, program and portfolio management will make those results possible.

Again, we thank Chairman Akaka and the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and District of Columbia for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

**Questions for the Record for the Honorable John Berry  
Senator George V. Voinovich  
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,  
the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia  
Uncle Sam Wants You! Recruitment in the Federal Government  
May 7, 2009**

**1. What percentage of federal jobs open to external applicants go to people already in the civil service? What, if any, impact does this have on the effectiveness of the federal government's recruitment strategies?**

Our Central Personnel Data File contains personnel transaction data; however, because it is not integrated with USAJOBS, where information about Federal job vacancies is housed, we have no means of identifying which applicants took which jobs. Some agencies, depending on their human resources management information systems, can use their record of hiring authorities to identify the number of jobs open to external applicants that are filled by people already in the civil service. For example, agencies participating in the shared service center with the Department of Interior's Federal Personnel and Payroll System can use the data recorded to distinguish between a conversion from one appointment to another and a new career-conditional/career appointment. Moreover, the Standard Form 52 also denotes previous Federal service. However, generally speaking, we cannot tell how many jobs across the Federal Government that are open to external applicants are filled by internal candidates.

The chart below, based on data from USAJOBS, shows the following:

- Those announcements that are open to the public (49.52 percent). These are often specified in the announcement as open to all U.S. citizens.
- Those announcements restricted to individuals currently within the Government (50.28 percent). These include Government employees with civil service "status," employees within a given agency, individuals who have been laid off and have reemployment rights (ICTAP, CTAP), etc.
- Those few exceptions ("exclusive posting") that don't require public posting (0.2 percent).

Accordingly, it is very difficult to draw any conclusions about the implications for the effectiveness of recruitment strategies of the breakdown between internal and external applicants. Federal agencies develop their own targeted recruitment strategies, based on analysis of their staffing needs in mission-critical occupations and likely sources of applicants.

<b>Selection</b>	<b>Jobs</b>
United States Citizens	79,812
Public	30,098
US Citizens and Status Candidates	17,767
All groups of qualified individuals	2,102
US Citizens and Non-Citizens	1,266
Student Program Eligibles	319
Outstanding Scholar Eligibles	8
<b>Public Total</b>	<b>131,372</b>
<b>Percent of Total Jobs</b>	<b>49.52%</b>
Status Candidates (Merit Promotion Eligibles)	107,676
Agency Employees Only – Appearing on USAJOBS	13,915
Agency Employees Only - Intranet Posting Only	9,622
Qualified Civil Service Employees	1,450
ICTAP	360
All groups of qualified individuals within the civil service	261
CTAP	95
<b>Status Total</b>	<b>133,379</b>
<b>Percent of Total Jobs</b>	<b>50.28%</b>
Exclusive Posting - Will Not Appear on USAJOBS or Intranet	527
<b>Other Total</b>	<b>527</b>
<b>Percent of Total Jobs</b>	<b>0.20%</b>

**2. What is the current time frame for the process from a candidate's recruitment to his or her commencing employment?**

In 2008, OPM solicited and collected baseline data from the time-to-hire records of twenty-four agencies. It is important to note that some agencies reported at the subcomponent or occupational level only; Because of this, the baseline data was weighted by the number of hires in the first quarter of fiscal year 2009 for the given agency/subcomponent/occupation that was reported on. When weighting the average with the number of hires in the first quarter, the average was 45.25 percent. This figure includes the Department of Defense (DoD), which had a large number of new hires. The weighted average without the DoD figures drops to just under 24 percent of the agencies who completed the recruitment through commencement of employment within 80 days.

**What do you see as your biggest obstacles in more effectively recruiting and hiring for your respective departments and agencies?**

One obstacle to quicker hiring is the lack of workforce planning in advance of recruitment. More pre-planning to update position descriptions, validate classification, and/or determine the interview structure would save time once recruitment has begun. Another obstacle to selecting

highly-qualified candidates is the level of communication between the hiring manager and human resources (HR) staff. More detailed information from the hiring official to HR regarding the position's required competencies, skills, knowledge and abilities, the background and experience of highly-qualified candidates, and what the individual would actually do on the job would assist HR to rate applicants accurately and ensure greater likelihood of a good match. And, of course, we lose good applicants by the cumbersome and lengthy Government application process, including long job announcements that are difficult for the applicant to decipher and the requirement to write essay responses to multiple questions related to knowledge, skills, and abilities.

To address these obstacles, the Administration is in the process of implementing a Governmentwide hiring reform initiative, including developing short-term and long-term strategies to address the most salient challenges to applicants and hiring managers in the hiring process. For example, Director Berry, with the support of the Office of Management and Budget, has advised agencies to develop strategies to begin tackling the obstacles mentioned above by:

- Mapping their current hiring processes;
- Developing and using streamlined job announcements that are written in plain language; and
- Engage hiring managers in all critical parts of the hiring process (i.e., recruitment, reviewing initial applications, interviewing applicants, and selecting applicants).

**3. Director Berry, Recruitment and hiring new employees are only part of the process. The subcommittee remains frustrated with the recent delays in implementing security clearance reform. It is my understanding the revised security clearance application form, ready for use at the end of December 2008, in "on hold" pending further review by OPM. Would you commit to reporting back to the Subcommittee in two weeks on the status of security clearance reform, and a timeline for getting the program back on track?**

Implementing security clearance reform remains a high priority here at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM staff meets weekly with counterparts from the Office of the Director for National Intelligence (ODNI), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to ensure progress on a variety of initiatives relevant to that process. My political team and I have been actively engaged. As one aspect of our review, we have been assessing proposed changes to the form about which you inquired, the Standard Form 86 (SF-86), and other information collection forms that OPM not only administers but also is responsible for re-clearing, periodically, with OMB and the Director of National Intelligence as the Security Executive Agent.

I am pleased to inform you that OPM, ODNI, and DOD have reached consensus on revisions of the SF-86, and that we will be submitting the newly-revised form to the Federal Register for

comment in the very near future. We are also continuing to work together to meet other security clearance reform goals, and I am confident that we are on track to do so as expeditiously as possible.

**4. OPM is authorized to use appropriated funds on recruitment advertising and information technology to facilitate recruitment governmentwide. What is the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2010 and how does this compare to prior years? To what extent do the departments and agencies have funds for advertising and technology tailored to their recruitment efforts?**

The President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2010 does not specifically identify any resources for Governmentwide recruitment advertising. During FYs 2006 thru 2008, OPM expended approximately \$1.25 million for media buys targeting numerous markets where potential applicants lived. These commercials were produced internally with the majority of costs related to air time. The resources were made available through internal reprogramming primarily due to attrition. In addition, OPM assisted the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) with its media campaign. The total cost was \$306K and was funded by PTO. We do not have information for any other Federal agency media campaigns.

OPM operates the USAJOBS website, an on-line recruitment tool that contains competitive job announcements for agencies Governmentwide. This program is funded through agency contributions at an annual cost of approximately \$10 million.

**5. Federal departments and agencies are authorized to use private recruitment companies. How frequently are such recruitment companies used and what percentage of recruitment activities do they service? Is there any data that show how successful these private companies have been in attracting candidates to public service employment? What is the cost of using these private recruitment entities and how much of the recruitment budget, if any, is generally set aside for this purpose?**

To date, OPM has not requested this type of data from agencies.

**6. Increasingly, the literature related to recruitment methods mentions that potential recruits regularly uses a variety of social networking sites to keep themselves informed and to stay connected. To what extent are federal departments and agencies using such social media to publicize vacant positions?**

In the private sector, the use of social media has reduced companies' reliance on major job boards. OPM encourages agencies to implement innovative recruiting practices to tap into diverse pools of applicants. Some agencies are using social media as a tool to market their

careers/mission or publicize their jobs. Even though OPM does not collect specific data of this type, anecdotally, we believe the number to be increasing.

**Is there any guidance currently available to departments and agencies on the use of social media?**

The General Services Administration recently negotiated contracts with several Web 2.0 sites which removed problems related to "liability limits, endorsements, freedom of information, and governing law." Platforms have signed with Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo and blip.tv. Similar agreements with Facebook, MySpace and Ning.com. may have already occurred. Twitter's original terms of service were already acceptable for use by the Government.

Here are some specifics relating to the new terms, according to the GSA:

Indemnification and limited liability: In negotiating the various agreements, we've been seeking to remove the indemnification clause (because agency officials cannot agree to tie their agencies to unlimited liability in violation of the Anti-Deficiency Act), and to ensure that liability is limited and covered by Federal law.

Although OPM has not issued guidance directly related to how departments and agencies should use social media as part of their recruitment efforts, OPM supports agencies' use of Web 2.0 tools for this purpose, consistent with each agency's mission and needs. As mentioned in our previous response, various agencies are experimenting with these platforms, and we expect over time experience will accumulate and yield a set of best practices to share Governmentwide. Prior to 2009, the Government generally could not use social media tools for recruiting or for any other purpose. This was because every Web 2.0 provider required the agency, before opening an agency user account, to agree to the company's Terms of Service (TOS), and those TOS contained provisions that Federal agencies could not agree to, such as clauses related to unlimited indemnification, jurisdiction, and governing law. To lift this roadblock, the General Services Administration (GSA), together with the Environmental Protection Agency, State Department, Library of Congress, Department of Education, and others, negotiated with Web 2.0 providers for free service under terms and conditions that respect the unique status and needs of the Federal Government. As of August 2009, what are known as Amended TOS Agreements for use by Federal agencies have been developed for over 20 companies in the social media space, including YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, MySpace, and Flickr. A set of the agreements is available at [https://forum.webcontent.gov/Default.asp?page=TOS\\_agreements](https://forum.webcontent.gov/Default.asp?page=TOS_agreements).

Individual agencies are able to review these model agreements to determine their appropriateness for their purposes, including possible use to assist their recruitment needs <http://www.flickr.com> /<http://www.youtube.com> /<http://www.vimeo.com> /<http://blip.tv> /<http://www.facebook.com> /<http://www.myspace.com> /<http://www.ning.com> /<http://www.twitter.com> /. On the broader subject of use of social media, OPM understands that those

agencies that have a public outreach mission are developing agency-specific policies and guidance on use of social media as a tool to further their missions. The Web Managers Council (<http://forum.webcontent.gov>) is a Governmentwide forum for agencies to share experiences and best practices in this realm.

**Are there any security concerns with regard to using such sites?**

Social Networking Services offer both opportunities and risks for a variety of Agency functions including recruitment. Risks include both malicious computer attacks as well as social engineering attacks. In using social networking services and other similar Internet-based Capabilities, it is important for Federal Agencies to advocate and ensure responsible and effective use. This includes providing the necessary operational and information security training and awareness to all users of these services to ensure their informed participation effectively mitigates the risks.

**7. What approaches do federal departments and agencies use to reach out to passive job candidates – those individuals who are known to have the skills and experience to fill a position, but who might not be actively searching for a new job?**

Most agencies do not have full-time recruiters with enough time to pursue passive candidates. To attract and recruit talented candidates who are not actively searching for jobs, agencies distribute job announcements to professional organizations, non-profit organizations, minority and advocacy groups, alumni groups, etc., as part of their overall recruitment efforts. Those agencies that have a strong employer brand or reputation and offer recruitment incentives are more competitive in recruiting passive candidates. Some agencies have established employee referral programs to attract new talent to the Federal Government, especially for hard-to-fill positions. In addition, social media (e.g., LinkedIn) are used to market jobs to passive candidates and make referrals.

Additionally, applicants can set up alerts in USAJOBS to notify them when jobs meeting certain parameters are posted. Agencies are also starting to make use of the USAJOBS resume mining capability. These tools can be helpful in reaching active as well as interested, but somewhat passive, job seekers. Agencies will sometimes advertise with associations, or in journals and other publications that are of interest to certain professions. Also, recruitment branding campaigns can be helpful in "selling" an agency's mission. Such messaging can sometimes attract passive candidates (e.g., Customs and Border Protection does some advertising through NASCAR). Finally, employee referrals can be another valuable way of accessing those who are not really in the market.

**8. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has established the "Recruitment One-Stop" program to facilitate the submission and processing of applications for federal jobs.**



**What feedback has been received from departments and agencies about how this program has performed and whether it contributes to an expedited recruitment process?**

OPM does not have any specific data from agencies to assess their perceptions of the impact of the "Recruitment One-Stop" (ROS) effort. Recruitment One-Stop was established to benefit job seekers by offering:

- A consolidated jobs database for all competitive service Federal job postings;
- A Federal Government branded web presence that delivers a fast and responsive experience;
- A job search routine that is clear, easy to use, and helps job seekers identify jobs that match both their skills and interests;
- An improved, intelligent, and efficient process for building on-line job applications;
- On-line application status tracking; and,
- Seamless integration with agency automated assessment systems.

The measurements of success were related to system integration and to that end, OPM met 4 of 5 indicators at 100 percent. The following indicators represent those measures and their status is found below:

- Resume Mining (Met)
- Job Search Engine Integration(Met)
- Announcement Integration-5 Tab Announcement (Met)
- Jobseeker Application Integration-Apply Online (Met)
- Applicant Status Integration-Link to agency communicated status (Not Met)

The last indicator of reporting "Applicant Status" through USAJOBS completes the system integration process and is the basis for issuance of OMB M-09-20 and Director Berry's memo entitled, "*Office of Personnel Management Assistance in Meeting Hiring Reform, Employee Satisfaction and Wellness Requirements Contained in the President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget and Performance Plans.*" In many cases, full integration requires modifications to IT systems as well as agency business processes. To that end, OPM is working with agencies and their automated assessment systems providers to eliminate any barriers to system integration and will have alternatives available no later than mid-November 2009. Once integration is achieved, USAJOBS will be able to provide applicants a seamless means of identifying all positions applied for and the status of their applications, regardless of the agency and/or assessment system involved.

**To what extent are departments and agencies using OPM's "recruitment roadmap" and to what effect?**

The 26 large CHCO agencies started using the End-to-End Hiring Roadmap, which includes recruitment as one of the five major components, in December 2008, and established baselines and targets for 13 measures. Since then, these agencies have implemented action plans to

meet their targets and will report on progress for the fiscal year in their Human Capital Management Report (HCMR) due to OPM in December 2009. To assist agencies, OPM has sponsored multiple agency-wide training on the five major components of the hiring roadmap. These trainings have been well attended. Recently, agencies were asked by OMB and OPM to do a process map of their hiring process and to compare it to OPM's 80-day model. A number of agencies have completed this action and posted results to the OMB Max shared portal. Agencies will provide a status report in the December HCMR on actions they plan to take to address barriers to more timely hiring.

**9. Would you recommend any statutory or regulatory changes to the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) program?**

OPM is currently reviewing all student intake programs, including the PMF Program, with regard to statutory, regulatory, and administrative changes that will make the programs more cohesive, efficient, and effective.

The Washington Post reported in March 2009 that more than 5,000 candidates applied to the PMF program this year. What methods are used to effectively and efficiently process the applications for this number of candidates?

Eligible applicants apply online to the PMF Program via a vacancy announcement on USAJOBS ([www.USAJOBS.gov](http://www.USAJOBS.gov)) or via a link on the PMF website. During the application process, applicants link their resume, complete a qualifications questionnaire, print the PMF Nomination Form (OPM Form 1300) for the nomination process, and submit supporting documentation for any claims to veterans' preference, all online. This use of automation allows us to more efficiently and effectively manage large applicant pools like those for the PMF Program.

To ensure only the best applicants are considered and selected for the PMF finalist pool, applicants must first be nominated to the PMF Program by their school's Dean, Chairperson, or Academic Program Director. All applicants nominated by their schools and found eligible for the PMF Program are invited to participate in a valid and rigorous assessment process conducted by OPM. This assessment emphasizes objective evaluation standards to choose the most qualified applicants for the finalist pool. Those individuals selected as finalists are invited to the annual PMF Job Fair and have one year from their announcement of finalists to receive fellowship appointments with the participating agencies.

**How has the job fair process, where PMFs are matched with departments and agencies, worked? From OPM's perspective, are the departments and agencies fully utilizing the skills and talents of their PMFs?**

The annual PMF Job Fair has been very effective in placing PMF finalists with participating agencies. The PMF Program Office estimates that over 60 percent of all PMF appointments are a result of the annual job fair.