

Statement of Senator George V. Voinovich

Nomination of M. John Berry to be Director, Office of Personnel Management

March 26, 2009

Good afternoon, and thank you, Chairman Akaka. It is a pleasure to be here today to review the qualifications of Mr. John Berry to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management. Mr. Berry, I applaud your continued commitment to public service, and look forward to hearing your plans for ensuring OPM and the federal government as a whole manages its most important asset – its workforce.

My own experience as County Auditor, County Commissioner, Mayor, and Governor has taught me that, of all the things in which government can invest, resources dedicated to human capital bring the greatest return.

Our nation is grappling with significant challenges – from the foreclosure crisis to record levels of unemployment. At the same time, our deficit continues to grow. Federal agencies are struggling to hire the workforce needed to meet current and future challenges, including responsibly allocating the almost \$790 billion in stimulus funds and processing the backlog of 767,000 Social Security disability claims. At the same time, agencies must prepare for the retirement of many experienced workers to ensure their knowledge is not lost with their departure from federal service.

The only way the federal government will succeed in accomplishing its many missions is if we improve our ability to recruit and retain a world class workforce and then recognize their daily contributions to improving government performance.

Mr. Berry, you seek this nomination at a critical time in OPM's history. Federal agencies are not fully engaged in strategic human capital planning. Key agencies remain at the bottom of the Best Places to Work rankings. Federal annuitants have been waiting for a modern retirement processing system since 1984. Individuals in need of access to classified information are forced to rely on antiquated systems. Job announcements make a poor impression on those who want to make a difference. As OPM's role continues to evolve, its workforce must be structured to tackle these challenges. In addition, OPM's human resource products must offer better value to agency customers.

Mr. Berry, I look forward to hearing how you will lead OPM in tackling these challenges. If confirmed, I would ask you to report to the subcommittee in 90 days with your short, near, and long-term priorities; so we can assist you in meeting them on behalf of our nation's public servants and the people they serve.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.