

September 29, 2016
Opening Statement of Senator Heidi Heitkamp
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and
Federal Management Hearing titled:
“Understanding the Millennial Perspective in Deciding
to Pursue and Remain in Federal Employment”

As Prepared

Thank you Chairman Lankford.

I am so pleased that we are having this hearing today on *Understanding the Millennial Perspective in Deciding to Pursue and Remain in Federal Employment*.

I would first like to say that I can appreciate that millennials are by no means an easy generation to define.

In fact, I had a whole discussion with my legislative staff one morning about the difference between an older and a younger millennial! And, I’m still not sure we came to a consensus.

It is important to say that while I have been looking forward to this hearing on millennials for some time, I would like to emphasize that this is only the start of the conversation.

We are so fortunate to have OPM, DHS, NASA, and GAO testifying today about their perspectives on this generation in the federal workforce, but those perspectives are by no means the only ones. I look forward to continuing this conversation down the road and hearing additional viewpoints.

From countless articles, studies, and radio segments, millennials have become a frequent topic of discussion regarding our federal workforce. And this will only increase over the next 30 years as millennials will certainly need to make up a larger and larger percentage of the federal workforce.

Nearly a third of the federal workforce will be eligible to retire in 2019, and it is essential that the federal government be prepared to recruit and retain the top talent from this generation of workers as effectively as possible, and as soon as possible.

While I appreciate that both OPM and the federal agencies have made tremendous strides in their recruitment and retention efforts, I am looking forward to a spirited discussion today on how the following challenges affect the millennial generation: compensation and benefits, career growth within federal agencies, the job application process in the federal government, and the intersection between engagement, creativity, and workplace culture.

Most importantly, I feel it is important for the federal government to connect with the millennial generation in a way that speaks to their needs and their desire to pursue mission-oriented careers, while also demonstrating all that a career in the federal government has to offer.

I am looking forward to identifying better ways of recruiting and retaining millennials in the federal workforce, and how we can be most helpful to you all as the Subcommittee with jurisdiction over this area.

I look forward to hearing the witness' opening remarks and talking with them.