

October 22, 2015

**Opening Statement of Senator James Lankford**

**Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs  
and Federal Management Hearing titled:**

**“Improving Pay Flexibilities in the Federal Workforce”**

Good morning. I want to welcome everyone to today’s Subcommittee hearing which will focus upon the topic of pay flexibilities in the federal workforce. We all want a federal government that runs efficiently and effectively for the American people. It is a bipartisan goal to find federal employees who are dedicated and serve our fellow citizens with excellence. Why would anyone want to have federal public servants that are not skilled and competent for the task? Attracting and keeping the best employees to serve in Washington D.C. and around the country is an effort worthy of the Subcommittee’s time and attention.

The federal workforce stretches across our nation, with a different set of opportunities and challenges at each location. Some unique considerations within the federal workforce are longstanding and clear. The challenges posed can be as simple as the differences in climate and location. Imagine how different it is to attract a skilled federal worker to a post in a rural northern town in Alaska than it is to Miami, Florida or Tulsa, Oklahoma.

However, we have also encountered federal workforce challenges that are not foreseeable or are challenging due to varying economic circumstances. A prime example of this was the unexpected and dramatic 2006 discovery of large amounts of oil in Eastern Montana and North Dakota. Since 2006, the oil boom in North Dakota has seen an incredible increase in economic activity such as housing and infrastructure demands, to name only a few. With these demands came an inevitable tug-of-war between the private sector and the government to see who could hire the best workers.

I commend Ranking Member Heitkamp for her leadership in addressing the very real challenges that face her State and the Bakken region, and for her work on federal workforce pay flexibility. I hope that with today’s hearing we can help make sure the federal government and the private sector have enough skilled workers to meet both of their demands.

We have with us today two panels of witnesses who are prepared to share their own perspectives on these issues. In our first panel, we have Ms. Brenda Roberts, Deputy Associate Director, Employee Services, Pay and Leave from the Office of Personnel Management. We have Ms. Linda Jacksta, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Human Resources Management from

U.S. Customs and Border Protection. And finally Ms. Debra Warner, who is Director of Civilian Force Management, and Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services from the U.S. Air Force.

In our second panel, we will hear testimony from Mr. William R. Dougan who is the President of the National Federation of Federal Employees, and Mr. Anthony Reardon, President of the National Treasury Employees Union. We thank each of you for being here this morning. I look forward to an informative discussion with our witnesses.