

WORK-LIFE PROGRAMS: ATTRACTING, RETAINING, AND EMPOWERING THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

Mr. KAUFMAN. Today's hearing on work-life programs aimed at recruiting and retaining talented federal employees could not come at a more critical time. With the Office of Personnel Management estimating that more than half of permanent, full-time federal employees will be eligible to retire by 2014, we need to find new ways to attract and retain young, talented career employees. We need to hire experienced mid-level professionals as well.

So that is the first step – getting people interested in federal careers. Once we get these new hires, we need to keep them by investing in our workforce. Access to work-life programs, such as child care, workplace flexibility, and others, are an important part of this effort.

This is why I have cosponsored the Federal Employee Paid Parental Leave Act, which would make federal parental leave benefits more competitive with the private sector. That bill remains pending before this subcommittee.

This hearing will help the Subcommittee better understand the next steps we need to take in Congress to make the federal government work better for its employees and the American people they serve. In addition to these issues, we continually need to explore new ways to make federal employment more attractive to America's graduates.

We must show our “best and brightest” – the young, idealistic men and women emerging from our colleges and universities – that public service offers them a lifetime of rewards and an opportunity to make a difference.

This is what I have tried to do with my weekly Great Federal Employees initiative. By sharing stories of what government employees do, my aim is to demonstrate the opportunities they have to shape the future of our nation and the world.

Young people today are so eager to be involved in making America and the world a better place. Federal employees do just that every day.

As a side note – Public Service Recognition Week, which we are celebrating this week, is a great way to promote these ideas. I am glad that Max Stier is here testifying, and I am looking forward to speaking at his organization's breakfast tomorrow morning honoring this year's Service to America finalists.

Before I close, I want to thank Chairman Akaka for his many years of leadership on the issue of promoting public service. I look forward to working with him, Ranking Member Voinovich, and the rest of my colleagues on this subcommittee over the coming months as we address the challenges of a twenty-first century federal workforce.