Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
Nomination Hearing to Consider Jeff T.H. Pon to be Director, Office of Personnel Management; Michael J. Rigas to be Deputy Director, Office of Personnel Management; and Emily W. Murphy to be Administrator, General Services Administration
October 18, 2017

Today the Committee will consider three nominations that are crucial to ensure efficient operations across the federal government:

Director and Deputy Director, Office of Personnel Management

The Director of the Office of Personnel Management is the human resources and personnel policy manager for the federal government and oversees a workforce of over 5,800 employees and a budget of about $280 million. The Director is responsible for issuing government-wide policies and guidance for recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining individuals for federal employment. The Director is also responsible for the administration of federal employee benefits programs, including retirement, health insurance, life insurance, and long term care insurance. The Director will also play a role in agency reorganizations under the President's Executive Order by assisting agencies with authorizations for personnel pay and hiring flexibilities. Given these important responsibilities, a strong Deputy Director is critical to supporting the Director and ensuring the success of the organization.

The Office of Personnel Management faces many challenges. The agency has been without a confirmed Director for more than two years—and without a Deputy Director for more than five years—at a time when it is still recovering from the unprecedented breach of data of 22.1 million current and retired federal employees by foreign operatives. The Civil Service Reform Act is approaching its 40th anniversary and there are concerns about whether the personnel systems established to protect merit-based employment are adapting to today's workforce needs. The Office of Personnel Management also must stabilize and reduce backlogs in the processing of retirement claims and security clearance background investigations.

Administrator, General Services Administration

The Administrator of the General Services Administration is responsible for implementing shared services government-wide, constructing and managing government properties and leases, and assisting agencies in procuring goods and services in a cost-effective manner. This role requires oversight of roughly $53 billion in annual procurement and 371 million rentable square feet, including 8,300 buildings, and a fleet of 210,000 vehicles. In addition, the Administrator oversees a workforce of around 11,500 employees and a $24 billion budget.

The Administrator plays a central role in two government operations that have long been plagued with operational challenges: information technology acquisitions and operations and real property management. While Congress has recently enacted legislation to assist the agency with real property management, there are millions of square feet in property leases soon to expire, and major construction projects that are behind schedule and over budget. Meanwhile, the Federal government spends more than $80 billion annually on information technology, with a large portion going to operation and maintenance of dangerously old systems. Contributing to the problem is a complex and inflexible acquisition process. With the Federal Acquisition Regulation nearing 2,000

pages, it is clear we have become penny-wise but pound foolish when it comes to overseeing how the government buys goods and services.

Jeff T.H. Pon (nominated to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management)

Jeff Pon has dedicated his career to human capital management and organizational development. He is currently the Chief Human Resources and Strategy Officer at the Society for Human Capital Management. Prior to that, Dr. Pon worked in the private sector, served as the Chief Human Capital Officer at the Department of Energy and as Deputy Director of eGov at the Office of Personnel Management. During his service in the federal government, Dr. Pon received the Grace Hopper Award, the Federal 100 Award, and Distinguished Service Awards from the Secretary of Energy and the Director of National Intelligence. Dr. Pon earned a Ph.D. and a Master of Sciences degree from the California School of Professional Psychology, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Southern California.

Michael Rigas (nominated to be Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management)

Michael Rigas has significant experience in improving and streamlining organizational operations in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. Mr. Rigas is currently serving as Senior Advisor at the General Services Administration Office of Small Business Utilization. He previously served as Chief of Staff at the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services and as an Associate Administrator at GSA. Mr. Rigas has also worked for the Heritage Foundation, the Republican Party of Massachusetts, Mellon Financial Corporation, and Brown Brothers Harriman and Company. Mr. Rigas earned a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard University and both a Masters of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Boston University.

Emily Murphy (nominated to be Administrator of the General Services Administration)

Emily Murphy has over a decade of experience in acquisitions, program management, and oversight in the federal government, the private sector, and as a congressional staffer. Ms. Murphy is currently serving as a Senior Advisor at the General Services Administration. Prior to that, she served on the House Armed Services and Small Business committees. Ms. Murphy worked as General Counsel and Vice President for Operations at TerreStar National Services and set up her own business in government procurement services. Ms. Murphy also served as Chief Acquisition Officer at General Services Administration and as Senior Advisor for Government Contracts and Business Development and as Associate Director for Government Contracts at the Small Business Administration. Ms. Murphy received a law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Smith College.

I'd like to thank the nominees for agreeing to serve in these important positions, and I look forward to hearing their testimony.