U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Nominations of Dale Cabaniss to be Director, Office of Personnel Management and Michael E. Wooten to be Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to both nominees for being here and for your willingness to serve.

Today we are considering the nominations of Dale Cabaniss to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management and Michael Wooten to be Administrator of the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Federal Procurement Policy.

It is fitting that we are holding this hearing during Public Service Recognition Week. I would like to take this moment to express my gratitude to our nation's civil servants, including both nominees, for their dedication and contributions to federal, state, and local government.

I appreciate that you have both expressed a desire to tackle some of the most pressing challenges facing the federal government and the federal workforce in particular.

Currently, one-third of the workforce is eligible to retire at the end of this year – while agencies struggle to recruit and retain talented employees, especially in critical areas such as cybersecurity and acquisitions.

There are many reasons for this difficulty. Antiquated hiring systems and layers of bureaucracy deter workers from considering federal service.

The recent record-setting partial government shutdown struck a severe blow to employee morale. Federal agencies cannot compete with the private sector financially. So we must seek out innovative ways to attract talented professionals to public service.

I am proud of the bipartisan work this Committee is doing in this area. Just last week, the Senate unanimously approved bipartisan cyber workforce legislation I authored that was cosponsored by Chairman Johnson and Senator Hassan.

This bill creates a new rotational program that offers cybersecurity professionals the unique opportunity to gain experience serving in multiple agencies.

We must continue this committee's longstanding commitment to pursuing bipartisan reforms to strengthen the federal workforce and help our government better serve the American people.

Ms. Cabaniss, Dr. Wooten, you have both indicated that if confirmed, you will pursue policies aimed at making government more efficient and effective. I share this goal.

Unfortunately, over the past two years, this Administration has shown a reluctance to engage with Congress in pursuit of this shared priority.

In March 2017, the President issued an executive order directing OMB to develop a government-wide reorganization plan with the stated goal of making government more efficient and effective.

Nearly one year ago, in June 2018, OMB released its proposal, which included plans to dismantle OPM in its current form.

Throughout this process, we have repeatedly requested basic information about the reorganization including data that justifies the proposal – an implementation plan – and an analysis of the impact on the federal workforce.

Nearly one year has passed since OMB unveiled this proposal and we have yet to see any of these.

I am disappointed by the Administration's lack of transparency around this proposal. In order to work together to achieve our shared goals, we must build upon a shared understanding of the facts.

Ms. Cabaniss, if you are confirmed, you will be leading an agency facing sweeping changes – significant uncertainty – and a need to rebuild trust with Congress. You will need to provide leadership, not only for OPM's 5,400 employees, but for the 2.1 million dedicated men and women serving in the federal workforce.

I will be listening carefully to your testimony today, and I am hoping to hear an unequivocal commitment to transparency and to safeguarding the federal civil service.