

TESTIMONY**STATEMENT OF
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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, PROLIFERATION,
AND FEDERAL SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

on
THE HOMELAND SECURITY FEDERAL WORKFORCE ACT
MARCH 12, 2002

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

GOOD AFTERNOON. I AM DON WINSTEAD. I SERVE AS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR COMPENSATION ADMINISTRATION FOR THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT. I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO DISCUSS S. 1800, THE HOMELAND SECURITY FEDERAL WORKFORCE ACT.

THE EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11TH FOREVER CHANGED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS. EVERY AGENCY MUST NOW CONSIDER ITS WORK AND MISSION IN A NEW CONTEXT, ONE THAT WAS NEARLY UNIMAGINABLE BEFORE. THE SKILLS NEEDED BY AGENCIES TO FULFILL THEIR EXPANDED HOMELAND SECURITY MISSIONS ARE DIVERSE AND IN MANY CASES UNIQUE TO THE PARTICULAR MISSION OF THE AGENCY.

THE ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING THE HUMAN CAPITAL NEEDS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCIES, WORKING TOGETHER WITH THIS SUBCOMMITTEE, AND SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT UNDERLYING S. 1800. WE STRONGLY SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE HAS THE PEOPLE IT NEEDS TO FULFILL HOMELAND SECURITY MISSIONS, AND WE STAND READY TO WORK WITH THE SPONSORS OF THIS LEGISLATION TO ACHIEVE OUR MUTUAL GOALS.

S. 1800 WOULD PROVIDE SPECIAL NEW PROGRAMS FOR THOSE COMPONENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH THAT HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN DESIGNATED AS NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCIES. FOR THOSE AGENCIES, IT WOULD PROVIDE AN ENHANCED STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM, A FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM COMPARABLE TO THE RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED "SCHOLARSHIP FOR SERVICE" PROGRAM, AND A PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE DETAILS OF EMPLOYEES BETWEEN NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCIES. THESE ARE ALL CONCEPTS WORTH STUDYING FURTHER.

WE WOULD URGE THAT CONSIDERATION BE IN THE CONTEXT OF BUILDING ON EXISTING PROGRAMS AND FLEXIBILITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CURRENT PROGRAM FOR THE REPAYMENT OF STUDENT LOANS FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HAS BEEN ACTUALLY OPERATING FOR A RELATIVELY BRIEF PERIOD. AS AGENCIES BECOME MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE PROGRAM AND ITS FRAMEWORK, WE EXPECT TO SEE GREATER AND MORE EFFECTIVE USE. WE BELIEVE ANY CONSIDERATION OF ENHANCEMENTS TO THE PROGRAM SHOULD REFLECT THOSE

EXPERIENCES.

THE ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEPARATE FUND FOR THIS WORTHY PURPOSE. WE ARE CONTINUING TO WORK WITH AGENCIES TO ASSIST THEM IN USING THEIR INDIVIDUAL SALARIES AND EXPENSES FUNDING TO TARGET THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION INCENTIVES THAT WILL BE MOST EFFECTIVE FOR THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS. WE BELIEVE ALLOWING AGENCIES TO MAKE THOSE DECISIONS IS APPROPRIATE, SINCE WE ARE ULTIMATELY HOLDING THEM ACCOUNTABLE.

TITLE II OF S. 1800 CREATES A FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS TO ENTER FEDERAL SERVICE IN NATIONAL SECURITY POSITIONS. WHILE WE QUESTION THE NECESSITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CREATING A NEW BOARD TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM, WE SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF THIS TITLE WHICH RESEMBLES THAT OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SERVICE PROGRAM CURRENTLY OPERATING TO BOLSTER THE GOVERNMENT'S INFORMATION ASSURANCE INFRASTRUCTURE.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY CORPS CONCEPT ALSO PARALLELS EXISTING AUTHORITIES. THE OPTION OF BROADENING AN EMPLOYEE'S PERSPECTIVE THROUGH ROTATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS AMONG ORGANIZATIONS IS ONE WE INCLUDE IN MANY OF OUR CURRENT PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE HIGHLY REGARDED PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT INTERN PROGRAM. TYPICALLY, THE PROGRAMS WHICH INCLUDE SUCH OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOT LIMITED TO A PARTICULAR AREA SUCH AS NATIONAL SECURITY.

HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE, IN TURN, THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY IS A BROAD ONE. EVERY AGENCY MUST BE CONCERNED WITH HOW ITS ROLE AND MISSION LINKS TO NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS. PERSONNEL IN THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL WORKING ON BIO-TERRORISM SOLUTIONS, CUSTOMS INSPECTORS DEVELOPING NEW STRATEGIES TO ASSURE THE SAFETY OF CONTAINERS IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES, AND FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY PERSONNEL WORKING ON IMPROVING EVACUATION PROCEDURES AND FIRE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ARE JUST A FEW OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WHOSE WORK INVOLVES NATIONAL SECURITY, BUT WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY NOT BEEN THOUGHT OF AS PART OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY WORKFORCE.

WE BELIEVE S.1800 SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS. IN OUR OPINION, IT MERITS CONSIDERATION ALONG WITH OTHER CURRENT PROPOSALS FOR CHANGES IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGERIAL FLEXIBILITY ACT.

THAT ACT OFFERS A NUMBER OF INITIATIVES THAT WOULD HELP ADDRESS THE HUMAN CAPITAL NEEDS RELATED TO NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE BROADER SENSE. SENATORS THOMPSON AND VOINOVICH HAVE INTRODUCED BILLS CONTAINING THESE IMPORTANT, GOVERNMENT-WIDE PROPOSALS. WE ENCOURAGE THE CONGRESS TO CONSIDER THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS WHICH WILL BENEFIT ALL FEDERAL AGENCIES -- EVEN THOSE WHOSE ROLES IN NATIONAL SECURITY MATTERS HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN GIVEN RECOGNITION. THE ADMINISTRATION LOOKS FORWARD TO THE UPCOMING HEARINGS TO BE HELD ON THE PRESIDENT'S LEGISLATIVE

PROPOSAL.

THE PRESIDENT'S "MANAGERIAL FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 2001" IS PART OF THE "FREEDOM TO MANAGE" INITIATIVE OUTLINED IN THE "PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT AGENDA" ISSUED IN LATE AUGUST. SPECIFICALLY, THE BILL WOULD EQUIP AGENCIES WITH ENHANCED AUTHORITY TO USE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND RELOCATION INCENTIVES, AS WELL AS OTHER TOOLS THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR. AGENCIES WOULD ALSO BE GIVEN AUTHORITY TO DIRECTLY HIRE CANDIDATES FOR CERTAIN POSITIONS FOR WHICH THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF CANDIDATES OR A CRITICAL HIRING NEED, AS WELL AS PERMITTING THE USE OF ALTERNATIVE RANKING AND SELECTION PROCEDURES IN THE HIRING PROCESS.

WE WISH TO MAKE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S SUPPORT FOR VETERANS' PREFERENCE HAS NOT ABATED IN ANY WAY. THIS ADMINISTRATION PLACES GREAT IMPORTANCE ON VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT ISSUES – IN PARTICULAR ENSURING THAT VETERANS RECEIVE THE EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCES THEY HAVE EARNED. THE VETERANS' PREFERENCE LAWS HAVE LONG BEEN A CORNERSTONE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE, AND OPM HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF EFFORTS TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT. WE SHARE THE VIEW HELD BY VETERANS' SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS THAT THE NATION OWES A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO ITS VETERANS. VETERANS' PREFERENCE PROVIDES A MEASURE OF COMPENSATION FOR THOSE BRAVE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO LEFT THEIR FAMILIES, HOME, AND HEARTH TO ANSWER THE NATION'S CALL TO ARMS.

AS A PACKAGE, THESE NEW AND EXPANDED AUTHORITIES WILL EMPOWER FEDERAL MANAGERS TO MAKE THE DECISIONS AND CULTIVATE A WORKFORCE THAT CAN LEAD TO INCREASED EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND CAN RESPOND TO THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF THE ECONOMY AND THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING WORLD.

THIS CONCLUDES MY REMARKS. I WILL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS.

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