



February 22, 2016

## FMA WORKING FOR YOU!

### FMA COMMENTS ON THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET PLAN

On February 9, President Barack Obama released his budgetary proposal for fiscal year 2017, calling for a \$4.1 trillion budget. Within his last budget of his presidency, President Obama called for a larger federal workforce, greater spending on cybersecurity, and an increase in federal pay. In his budget message, Obama commented, "As we make these investments to meet our great challenges, we are also working to build a 21<sup>st</sup> century government that delivers for the American people." As the federal government responds to increased demands from the American public and the largest threat to cybersecurity, it is necessary to have a federal budget that can meet these needs. The Federal Managers Association (FMA) issued a press release on the plan, stating that while it does not fully address issues hindering the federal workforce, it takes steps in the right direction in regards to federal pay and IT hiring.

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## WHAT'S AFFECTING FEDS?

### COBERT'S ELIGIBILITY FOR OPM ACTING DIRECTOR QUESTIONED

*Government Executive*

Office of Personnel Management Inspector General Patrick McFarland issued a letter to Acting Director Beth Cobert on February 10, in which he commented that due to the 1998 Federal Vacancies Reform Act, P.L. 105-277, Acting Director Cobert is ineligible for her position. The law states that an acting agency head can be appointed in one of three ways: already be the first assistant to the position; the appointee holds a Senate confirmed position in another agency; or, the appointee is a senior employee from the same agency. Cobert assumed the role of Acting Director after serving as Deputy Director of Management at the Office of Management and Budget, which does not meet these requirements. As such, IG McFarland has stated the actions of Cobert as Acting Director since her appointment are null and void. The Obama Administration commented, "Since 1999, presidents of both parties have relied upon the consistent guidance and interpretation of that act by the Department of Justice governing when individuals may serve in an acting capacity while their nominations are pending before the Senate, and the administration continues to rely upon that guidance. We firmly believe that Acting Director Cobert is acting within the confines of the law."

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## **BILL WILL CALL FOR A 5.3 PERCENT FEDERAL PAY RAISE**

*Government Executive*

Following President Barack Obama's call for a 1.6 percent federal pay raise in his fiscal year 2017 budget proposal, Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA) announced he will introduce legislation that provides a 3.9 percent pay raise and a 1.4 percent increase to locality pay. The Federal Managers Association, along with other members of the Federal-Postal Coalition, offered support for the bill.

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## **SENATE COMMITTEE PASSES ADMIN LEAVE AND APPROVES BETH COBERT TO HEAD OPM**

*Washington Post*

During a business meeting on February 10, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee showed their commitment to creating efficiencies within the federal government by passing the Administrative Leave Act (S. 2450). The bill allows for commonsense reforms that define administrative leave and provide a time limit for how long it can be used. The committee also approved the nomination of Beth Cobert to permanently take over the role as Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

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## **OPM OUTLINES ONBOARDING PROCESS FOR SES MEMBERS**

*Government Executive*

In a memo to federal agencies and departments' Chief Human Capital Officers, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued guidance on creating onboarding programs for new members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). OPM commented on how the onboarding program will allow SES members to gain valuable knowledge of the agency's culture; performance expectations; available influential networks; and, support from agency leadership.

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## **MSPB AGAIN RULES IN FAVOR OF VA SENIOR EXECUTIVE**

*Federal News Radio*

For the third time, the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) overturned the termination of a Senior Executive at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), citing that while wrongdoing occurred, it did not warrant removal from duty. Under the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act (P.L. 113-146) a lesser form of punishment is not permitted. Commenting on the ruling, MSPB Administrative Judge Arthur Joseph stated, "While the agency may rightfully expect someone in the appellant's senior position to take further precautionary measures under the circumstances, the fact remains that she did immediately act in a way that remedied the problem, permanently, with no resulting harm."

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## GET INVOLVED AT THESE EVENTS!

### JOIN FMA NEXT MONTH FOR THE 78TH NATIONAL CONVENTION AND MANAGEMENT TRAINING SEMINAR!

In less than a month, the Federal Managers Association (FMA) hold its 78<sup>th</sup> National Convention and Management Training Seminar, March 13-16, 2016, at the Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria Hotel in Alexandria, Virginia. The event, entitled, *Developing and Engaging the Workforce*, will focus on how managers can strengthen employee engagement in order to create a more efficient and effective federal government. To review the agenda for the seminar, please [click here](#). The National Convention also provides a great opportunity for FMA members to discuss issues affecting their chapter and how FMA can promote excellence in the federal government. For more information on the National Convention, including registration and hotel rates, as well as the entire agenda, please visit: <http://www.fedmanagers.org/National-Convention-2016>.

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*The Federal Managers Association, established in 1913, is the oldest, largest, most influential association representing the interests of the 200,000 managers, supervisors and executives serving in today's federal government.*

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