

GOVERNMENT MANAGERS COALITION

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November 2, 2011

The Honorable Darrell Issa
Chairman, Committee on
Oversight and Government Reform
2347 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member, Committee on
Oversight and Government Reform
2235 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Cummings:

On behalf of the five major federal sector executive and management professional associations comprising the Government Managers Coalition (GMC), we are writing to express our concerns with H.R. 3029, legislation which would reduce the size of the workforce through attrition. The bill is currently scheduled for mark up in your Committee this week.

The Government Managers Coalition collectively represents the interests of over 200,000 supervisors, managers and executives throughout the federal government. The focus of the Coalition is to promote good government initiatives that increase workforce efficiencies and provide managers with needed tools to effectively carryout their jobs and the missions of their agencies. Our organizations urge you to reject any proposals which would arbitrarily decrease the size of the federal government independent of a strategic plan for managing the workload or cuts to specific programs. As the managers, supervisors and executives in the federal government, our members have first-hand experience with the impact across-the-board cuts to the federal workforce have on agency missions.

While we appreciate the desire of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee to consider all avenues to reduce the deficit, we do not believe adopting an arbitrary policy of attrition or freezing federal hiring is a desirable means of doing so. We are primarily concerned that enacting proposals promoting a government-wide workforce reduction or hiring freeze absent a comprehensive strategic plan will severely impede agencies' efforts to maintain proper staffing levels based on their established missions. Plans such as these fail to account for the services agencies provide to taxpayers and the personnel levels necessary to effectively provide such services. Agencies that have direct contact with the general public, such as the Internal Revenue Service, Social Security Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs, rely heavily on staff to provide needed assistance at a time when American citizens are demanding more from their government. As you know, federal programs assist Americans in myriad ways, from food inspection and cancer research, to law enforcement and transportation safety. A reduction in the size of the federal workforce could well amount to a reduction in vital services Americans expect on a daily basis.

Past efforts to reduce the civil service carried out during the Clinton administration resulted in an immediate deterioration of service to the public, leading to the hiring of contractors to make up for lost work. The negative impacts of those cuts on the remaining managers and the ability of federal employees to meet critical missions have been long-lasting, and many agencies are still tackling increased workloads stemming from the civil service cuts in the 1990s. An independent review of the cuts in the '90s reported that, due to the reductions-in-force and the lack of corresponding workload

cuts, the federal government hired hundreds of thousands of contractors to complete the work left behind by the dispatched federal employees. Ultimately, neither the cost nor the true size of the actual federal workforce (including contractors) shrank during this time.

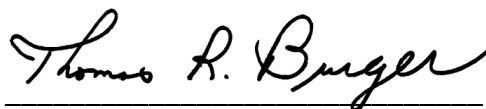
We are further concerned that efforts to arbitrarily cap or cut the size of the federal workforce fail to account for agency programs that are mandated by Congress. Agencies do not have the authority to change programs or realign priorities when the workforce is reduced. However, when agencies are granted flexibility to cut specific programs, budgets and personnel can be reduced accordingly. In order for Congress to reduce the deficit in a sensible manner, agency programs and staffing levels should be evaluated on a program-by-program basis with duplicative programs and processes receiving the most attention. Congress can then provide agencies the flexibility to reallocate resources, including personnel, to effectively carry out the programs which are funded. Neglecting to do so could result in waste and inefficiency, exacerbating the very problems attrition proposals claim to address.

We urge you to take a more strategic approach to deficit reduction and urge you to reject any legislation that does not do so, including H.R. 3029. Thank you for your time and consideration of our views. Should you have any questions, please contact Jessica Klement with the Federal Managers Association at (703) 683-8700.

Sincerely,



DAVID S. CONLEY
President
FAA Managers Association



THOMAS R. BURGER
Executive Director
Professional Managers Association



PATRICIA J. NIEHAUS
President
Federal Managers Association



CAROL A. BONOSARO
President
Senior Executives Association



STEVE CLIFTON
President
National Council of Social Security
Management Associations

Cc: Members of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee