

February 11, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of over 200,000 managers and supervisors currently serving the nation in the federal government, and whose interests are represented by the Federal Managers Association (FMA), I am writing to express strong opposition to H.R. 417, the Federal Workforce Reduction Through Attrition Act, as it calls for significant cuts to human capital throughout the federal government independent of a strategic plan for managing the workload. As the managers, supervisors and executives in the federal government, our members have first-hand experience as to the impact capricious cuts to the federal workforce will have on agency missions.

While FMA appreciates Congress' desire to look at all avenues to reduce the deficit, an arbitrary policy of attrition does not achieve this goal. Policy calling for reductions in force fail to account for the services agencies provide to taxpayers or the necessary personnel levels 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, need to be fully staffed to provide necessary assistance at a time when American citizens are demanding more from their government.

FMA is further concerned that efforts to cap or cut the size of the federal workforce do not reflect the need of agencies as they strive to meet congressionally-mandated missions, thus leaving responsibilities unfulfilled. Many of the programs and directives that federal agencies carry out are mandated through statute or appropriations, and agencies do not have the flexibility to change their priorities based on levels of staffing. 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 will amount to a reduction in vital services Americans expect on a daily basis.

In looking for a creative solution to develop a more effective federal government, many previous administrations and congressional leaders have focused on what they see as a "bloated" federal workforce. A cut of the workforce based upon an across-the-board ratio for the entire federal service is not the answer. Instead of promoting arbitrary workforce caps, I encourage you to instead examine the missions and priorities of each agency to determine the work that must be done. In order for lawmakers to show they are serious about reducing 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 those priorities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our views. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact FMA's Government Affairs Director Greg Stanford at gstanford@fedmanagers.org or (703) 683-8700.

Sincerely,



Patricia J. Niehaus
National President