

March 20, 2019

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Smith, Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Thornberry, and Ranking Member Reed:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations – which collectively represent career federal employees – we write with regard to rumors that the Department of Defense (DOD) will propose a provision in the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) seeking to repeal Section 1111 of the FY2017 NDAA (P.L. 114-328) which ended the national security exemption to appointment of retired military members of the armed forces within 180 days of retirement. We urge lawmakers to maintain the policy approved in the FY2017 NDAA which reflects historical practice on retired members of the military joining the civil service.

Between September 14, 2001 and passage of the FY2017 NDAA on December 23, 2016, retired military members were able to be hired as civilian federal employees without a waiver and bypassing the traditional 180-day post-retirement cooling off period. While retired members of the military certainly have much to offer as civilian federal employees, their appointment without waiver and without the cooling off period has had unintended consequences. It has blocked off advancement opportunities for other civilian career leaders in the Defense Department, diverted attention from external candidate recruiting, and has slowed progress on ensuring diversity in all forms is represented in DOD's senior civilian leadership ranks. Congress can help ensure a diversity of life experience and all backgrounds among DOD's career civilian workforce, and particularly among its leadership cadre, by maintaining the policy included in Section 1111 of the FY2017 NDAA.

Thank you for your consideration of SEA's perspective. Please have your staff contact SEA Executive Director Jason Briefel (Jason.Briefel@seniorexecs.org; 202-971-3300) for further information.

Sincerely,

National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
Federal Managers Association (FMA)
Senior Executives Association (SEA)