

GOVERNMENT MANAGERS COALITION

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June 12, 2019

The Honorable Adam Smith, Chairman
The Honorable Mac Thornberry, Ranking Member
United States House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Thornberry, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the five major federal sector executive and management professional associations comprising the Government Managers Coalition (GMC), we write to express our areas of concern and support related to the House Armed Services Subcommittee Marks for the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

The GMC collectively represents the interests of more than 250,000 supervisors, managers, and executives throughout the federal government. Our mission is to promote good government initiatives that foster effectiveness and efficiency. A key component of good governance is ensuring agencies have the competitive workforce necessary to conduct their missions.

Our immediate concern is that Section 1102 of the Subcommittee on Readiness NDAA legislation does not allow adequate research to be completed on the two-year probationary period which was granted to the Department of Defense in the 2016 NDAA (P.L. 114-92). As such, the GMC strongly opposes Section 1102. It would reverse sound policy reasons for an extended probationary period of two years without providing any evidence nor rationale for the change and return to one year.

The change was created [based on](#) the understanding that “one year often does not allow sufficient time for a supervisor to form conclusions regarding the performance of a new employee.” It is our belief that many positions do indeed require more than one year to assess employee fit and job performance, providing that time sets the employee, the supervisor, and the agency up for success.

It is unclear if this is no longer true, if the Department determined the 2-year probationary period did not have the desired consequence, or if another consequence of the policy arose. We have heard from our members no issues nor evidence that the longer probationary period at DOD is inhibiting hiring of a qualified civilian workforce. Until these questions are answered, the policy should remain in place and be reviewed by an independent body, such as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to determine its success. We caution the Committee against removing a provision without adequate understanding of its potentially beneficial impacts.

That being said, the GMC endorses Sections 1104 and 1105 of the Subcommittee on Readiness NDAA legislation which expand benefits for civilian personnel on official duty in combat zones

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and extend premium pay for federal civilian employees working overseas. These dedicated civil servants often leave their homes in unique service to their country and should be honored and rewarded for their sacrifice. We applaud Committee members for recognizing their commitment to public service.

As the full Committee reviews these and many other proposals, the GMC would like to remind Members of the important proposals offered by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) earlier this year. The GMC wrote this committee on May 8, 2019 endorsing the proposals.

Among these proposals were the ability for agencies to address critical hiring needs through allowing agencies to noncompetitively appoint individuals to temporary or term appointment positions, allowing agencies to provide certain time-limited employees the ability to compete for permanent employment within their agency, extending the ability for agencies to grant dual compensation waivers, and lifting the statutory cap on the number of student interns that can be appointed under a hiring authority.

These additions to the NDAA will help agencies attract and retain top talent in pursuit of their missions, including at the Department of Defense.

Furthermore, OMB proposed establishing a mechanism for the private sector and the federal government to exchange ideas and expertise that will help foster innovation and modernization throughout the federal government. Including stakeholders and industry representatives in collaborative efforts will help usher the federal workforce into the 21st Century while building public trust in our institutions.

Each of these proposals would strengthen the civil service and enhance the federal government's ability to serve the American people. Thank you for your consideration of the GMC's perspective.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Natalia Castro with the Senior Executives Association at ncastro@shawbransford.com or (202) 463-8400.

Sincerely,



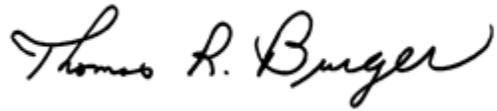
MCKAY GERBER
President
FAA Managers Association



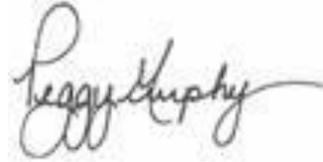
RENEE M. JOHNSON
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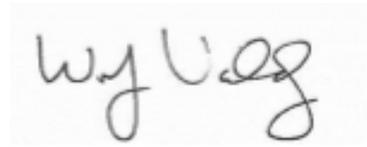
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CC: Members of the House Armed Services Committee