



June 4, 2024

Sent via e-mail

Dear Chairman Burgess, Ranking Member McGovern, and members of the House Committee on Rules,

The undersigned members of the Federal-Postal Coalition, which is comprised of 31 national organizations that collectively represent more than five million federal and postal workers and retirees across the country, write in support of the bipartisan Connolly-Fitzpatrick Amendment (#140) to H.R. 8070, the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 and urge you to make it in order for a floor vote.

Amendment #140 would limit the ability of the executive branch to bypass the entire framework of the merit-based civil service through the creation of broad new exceptions to the application of merit-based rules. Specifically, the amendment would prohibit the reclassification of any position in the competitive service to an excepted service schedule that was created after September 30, 2020, and limit federal employee reclassification to the five excepted service schedules in use prior to fiscal year 2021.

A competitive, merit-based civil service provides continuity through changing administrations, preserves institutional knowledge and expertise within the federal government, and safeguards the rule of law.

Government agencies such as the Department of Defense (DoD) rely heavily on qualified and experienced professionals in the civil service to accomplish their vital missions. Merit-based hiring and firing for civilians ensures competent individuals, as opposed to those with the most political connections, carry out the work of government. It also protects against abuse of power by the executive branch, providing greater assurance that laws passed by Congress will be faithfully executed.

The amendment guards against recent attempts to utilize broad exceptions to competitive service rules to upend the merit-based system that has served this country effectively since the late 1800s. It does so by shoring up statutory loopholes designed to provide flexibility for extenuating circumstances, which are available through existing excepted services schedules. Creation of broad new exceptions, such as Schedule F, could effectively transform tens of thousands of civil service positions into political appointments.

A competent, apolitical civil service is paramount to a strong national defense. Key apolitical roles in DoD require valuable expertise, particularly amidst a fraught geopolitical environment. The programs and activities authorized by the underlying bill are at risk of failure if implemented by biased and unqualified partisan loyalties – from either party – as opposed to individuals with years of relevant experience.

For these reasons, we ask that you make amendment #140 in order and support its inclusion in the NDAA. If you have any questions, please contact the Federal-Postal Coalition Chair, Katie Maddocks, at kmaddocks@npmhu.org.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)

American Foreign Service Association (AFSA)
American Postal Workers Union (APWU)
Federal Aviation Administration Managers Association (FAAMA)
Federal Managers Association (FMA)
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE)
Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA)
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE)
National Association of Agricultural Employees (NAAE)
National Association of Assistant United States Attorneys (NAAUSA)
National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)
National Association of Postal Supervisors (NAPS)
National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA)
National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)
National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPMHU)
National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU)
National Weather Service Employees Organization (NWSEO)
Patent Office Professional Association (POPA)
Postal Police Officers Association (PPOA)
Professional Aviation Safety Specialists (PASS)
Professional Managers Association (PMA)
Senior Executives Association (SEA)