

GERALD E. CONNOLLY
11TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA
2238 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-1492

FAIRFAX OFFICE:
4115 ANNANDALE ROAD
SUITE 103
ANNANDALE, VA 22003
(703) 256-3071

PRINCE WILLIAM OFFICE:
2241-D TACKETT'S MILL DRIVE
WOODBRIE, VA 22192
(571) 408-4407

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4611

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEES:
CHAIRMAN, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
ECONOMIC AND CONSUMER POLICY
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA, AND INTERNATIONAL
TERRORISM
ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND NONPROLIFERATION

November 24, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-307
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Granger, and Vice Chairman Leahy:

The American people rely each day on the expertise and dedication of our nation's federal workforce. On October 21, 2020, President Donald Trump issued an executive order that would undermine the foundation of that workforce—our civil service of non-partisan professionals who serve all Americans without regard to political party.¹ These civil servants use data, evidence, and expertise to conduct scientific research for a coronavirus vaccine, develop the policies to fight fires that are ravaging Colorado and California, and protect our national security from threats at home and abroad.

We write with great urgency to request that the forthcoming continuing resolution or omnibus spending bill include language that reverses the implementation of this executive order and requires the immediate return of any federal employee reclassified pursuant to it.

The executive order contradicts 137 years of tradition and practice based on merit systems principles.² It would expedite the hiring of political appointees into jobs without regard to merit and place them in roles best served by career civil servants—including economists, scientists, and data analysts. This action could multiply the number of political appointees within the federal workforce by tens of thousands and permit the firing of current federal

¹ Exec. Order No. 13957 (Oct. 21, 2020).

² Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act, Pub. L. No. 47-27 (1883).

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employees whom agency heads determine make “substantive contributions to executive branch policy.”³

According to recent media reports, the Office and Management and Budget (OMB) has already completed its request for reclassifying positions pursuant to the executive order. The report states that “OMB Director Russ Vought has classified 88% of that agency’s workforce, 425 employees.”⁴

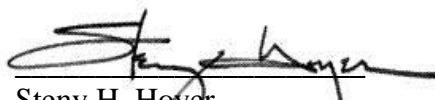
This executive order, which the Trump Administration is rushing to implement without adequate analysis just weeks before the President leaves office, could precipitate an exodus from the federal government, leaving federal agencies without deep institutional knowledge, expertise, experience, and the ability to develop and implement long-term policy strategies. In addition, if the incoming Biden Administration repeals the executive order in whole or in part, implementing it now would waste significant time and resources as a result of the unnecessary classification and reclassification of thousands of federal employees.

We ask that you join us in reversing this harmful executive order. Please consider using some or all of the legislative language in the Saving the Civil Service Act, sponsored by Rep. Gerald E. Connolly, House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer and Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney.⁵


Sincerely,



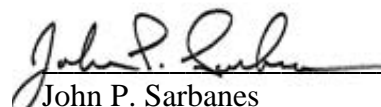
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer
House Majority Leader



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

³ Exec. Order No. 13957 (Oct. 21, 2020).

⁴ *OMB Lists Positions Stripped of Job Protection Under Trump Order*, Real Clear Politics (Nov. 21, 2020) (online at www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2020/11/21/omb_lists_workers_stripped_of_job_protection_under_trump_order_144708.html).

⁵ H.R. 8687, The Saving the Civil Service Act (online at www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/8687?s=1&r=1).

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Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



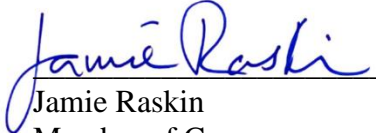
Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



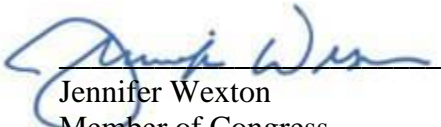
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



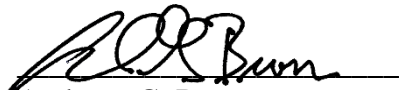
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress



David Trone
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress