

Sarah Elfreth, Member of Congress, Maryland's Third Congressional District

Testimony Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

March 3, 2026

Chairman Joyce, Ranking Member Hoyer, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in front of the committee. I am Congresswoman Sarah Elfreth and I have the privilege of representing Maryland's Third Congressional District.

Federal workers are the backbone of our nation and are critical to the many government services that hundreds of millions of Americans depend on. As the daughter of civil servants, I personally understand the vital role that our public servants play in our economy and government.

Furthermore, Maryland's Third District alone is home to 44,000 federal employees.

The work that this subcommittee produces is critical for federal employees across our country.

The Financial Services and General Government subcommittee handles agencies at the epicenter of the current fight for federal employee rights: OPM, Postal Service, Treasury and the IRS, the Merit Systems Protection Board, and most notably—the White House and OMB.

Each day, the current Administration's plan to dismantle the civil service seems to target a new portion of the federal workforce. The recent attacks on probationary workers especially impact workers of my generation, people who are early to mid career, and those who will be the next generation of leaders in civil service. These workers are being arbitrarily fired for no cause whatsoever. These folks were not given two weeks notice. They were not given severance. They

were shut off from their work and from their livelihoods when they have mortgages, children, and parents to take care of. These are patriots who serve their country every day and were tossed to the curb and told to not let the door hit them on the way out simply because it was easy to do so. It is demoralizing, illegal, and unimaginable for so many of our hard working civil servants.

Currently, there is no uniform provision in statute that guarantees if a probationary federal employee is separated from service during this period, that if and when they are reinstated, they will not have to restart their probationary period. We have had some progress made in the courts and through the Merit Systems Protection Board in reinstating probationary employees. In a time of chaos and uncertainty, we must clarify these guidelines and regulations for our federal workers. This is unacceptable. This is why next week, I will introduce legislation that will allow probationers who are reinstated to pick up their probationary period where they left off. This is common sense legislation and I ask that its language be included in the subcommittee mark.

This committee has an opportunity to do right by our civil servants who ensure that our drinking water is clean, our food and drugs are safe, our weather is forecasted, and social security checks go out on time. I ask that you include language in the FY26 bill that reinstates all probationers fired since Jan 20, 2025 and ensures when these employees are reinstated, they will not need to restart their probationary period for the same job they previously held.

We have all seen the latest reports. This Administration intends to continue to illegally remove civil servants from their jobs, putting life-saving services in the hands of political, unqualified political cronies - or no one at all. The irony, of course, is that the civil service was created to

avoid this situation. The Congress recognized that cronyism and corruption did not serve the American people and did something in 1883 to create a merit-based civil service system.

For the future of our civil service—and for a government that people in all of our districts can depend on—I urge this Committee to use every tool at your disposal to protect our federal workers from the onslaught of attacks that President Trump and Elon Musk are leading.