

SENTON 3/8/2023

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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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March 8, 2023

The Honorable Kiran Ahuja
Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20415-1000

Dear Director Ahuja:

I appreciate your agreeing to appear before the Oversight and Accountability Committee tomorrow morning. I am looking forward to working with you on federal workforce issues. To make the most productive use of our time together tomorrow, I am sending you questions to consider in advance. Please be prepared to answer them directly at the hearing.

Like many of my Republican colleagues, I am concerned about the impact of the massive and ongoing increase in telework throughout the Executive Branch, which has left many federal office buildings near-vacant and reduced the ability of agencies to deliver their missions. And there seems no end in sight.

Over a year ago, President Biden said “the vast majority of federal workers will once again work in person.”¹ In September of 2022, he said “the pandemic is over.”² Last month, he announced the national emergency concerning the COVID-19 pandemic would end May 11, 2023.³ The COVID pandemic is over. If telework is no longer required for safety reasons, then it is incumbent on the Administration to explain why so many offices remain vacant, allowing service to suffer. What’s clear is that the current status quo, under which federal employees stay home while expensive federally-leased office buildings remain largely vacant, is a bad deal for American citizens.

¹ President Biden’s State of the Union Address, The White House (March 1, 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/state-of-the-union-2022/>

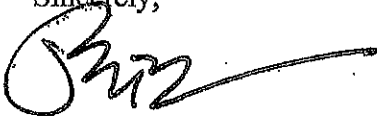
² Scott Pelley, President Joe Biden: The 2022 60 Minutes Interview, CBS News (September 18, 2022), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/president-joe-biden-60-minutes-interview-transcript-2022-09-18/>

³ Notice on the Continuation of the National Emergency Concerning the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic, The White House (February 10, 2023). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2023/02/10/notice-on-the-continuation-of-the-national-emergency-concerning-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-pandemic-3/>

1. As OPM director, you are responsible for overseeing the management of the federal workforce. As such, please describe, with timelines, your plan to get federal workers back to work in person, as the President pledged.
2. If that plan has changed, please present what analysis and evidence OPM used in determining that the current posture of massive telework makes the federal government more productive and enhances its work on behalf of the American people.
3. What is the source of telework data OPM uses to determine telework rates and workforce productivity under telework posture? Explain how OPM ensures this data is accurate.
4. Outline any plans OPM is making with the General Services Administration and relevant federal agencies to reduce the federal footprint by terminating federal leases and selling off unused federally owned buildings.

Please be prepared to appear before the Committee and answer these questions with short concise answers. If an additional more complete explanation is required, I welcome you to submit those answers for the record.

Sincerely,



Pete Sessions
Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations
and the Federal Workforce

cc: The Honorable Kweisi Mfume
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Federal Workforce