

Testimony of John B. Goodman
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*Hearing before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security,
Subcommittee on Oversight, Management, and Accountability*

“CBP Workforce Challenges: Exploring Solutions to Address Recruitment and Retention”

March 7, 2019

Chairwoman Torres Small, Ranking Member Crenshaw, members of the Subcommittee on Oversight, Management, and Accountability, thank you for inviting me to testify today. My name is John Goodman, and I am the Chief Executive of Accenture Federal Services, or AFS. I am pleased to be here today to testify about AFS’s work with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. This is an important and multifaceted project. I appreciate the opportunity to share our insights into the innovative approaches we are taking to tackle a long-standing problem, the progress we have made, the challenges we have encountered, and the refinements we are making to help CBP meet its goals.

AFS has been a valued partner to the U.S. federal government for more than four decades. Every day, the 9,000 people of AFS work side by side with thousands of dedicated public servants to solve their toughest challenges at the heart of our nation’s priorities, from national defense to health care access and quality. We bring together innovation, the latest technology, and leading commercial practices so our federal clients can make a real and positive impact on how Americans work and live. As someone who served in various leadership roles in the federal government, I consider it an honor to lead an organization that has the singular purpose of helping federal departments, agencies, and offices perform their missions. For example, I’m proud to say that, through our work, the Army can better manage its finances, and the Defense Logistics Agency can more effectively deliver goods and services needed by our servicemen and women around the

world. I am also proud of the work AFS has done with the Department of Veterans Affairs to bring the most innovative technology solutions to advance and optimize quality medical care for our nation's veterans. And we have helped the Transportation Security Administration recruit and hire 12,000 positions in 2018 to make air travel safer. Work like this is squarely within our mission at Accenture: to improve the way people live and do business, making processes more efficient and technology more effective.

The Subcommittee today is focused on CBP's efforts to recruit, hire, and retain Border Patrol Agents, Customs Border Protection Officers, and Air and Marine Interdiction Agents. These are important positions essential to protect the homeland. As one might expect, the hiring process is rigorous and lengthy. Applicants must successfully navigate twelve steps in the hiring process, where they must meet physical requirements, pass an entrance exam, undergo an interview, pass a drug test, complete a background investigation, and undergo a polygraph examination. At the time we were awarded a contract to assist CBP with recruitment and hiring, more than 130 initial applicants were needed to successfully hire one Border Patrol Agent.

CBP engaged AFS through an innovative contract structure that incentivized AFS to use commercial best practices and new technologies to build a high-quality applicant pipeline and increase the number of hires. This contract was very favorable to both the agency and taxpayer, in that approximately 93% of the dollars to AFS could only be paid as new agents are hired and report for duty. Subsequent contract modifications also enabled the new technology solutions that we developed to be tailored to additional CBP needs at no additional cost to the government.

Since the contract was awarded, AFS has delivered significant capabilities, and we are fully operational in accordance with the contract terms. The team has designed and implemented a number of important innovations for CBP, including:

- **A hiring and recruitment platform** that included a Talent Network of recruits for CBP frontline officer and agent positions;
- **A Digital Marketing and Advertising Campaign, with new creative materials, digital advertising, and online interaction capabilities**, that is targeting potential candidates and driving improvements in the effectiveness of AFS and CBP marketing investments;
- **A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform** that allows AFS to provide ongoing regular applicant care to engage with applicants throughout a 300-plus day hiring cycle; and
- **Two new call centers that are fully accredited to CBP Security Standards** that support applicants processed by AFS *and* CBP.

As a result of these efforts, AFS has developed a Talent Network of more than 100,000 candidates, and a full recruitment and hiring capability that has processed 4,795 applicants through various hiring steps as of December 1, 2018. In short, AFS helped lay a foundation for a modern, state-of-the-art hiring process that is today delivering results for CBP. One result was a significant improvement in the hiring ratio of applicants to job offers, which was achieved through the joint efforts of AFS and CBP.

Unfortunately, recent media reports, as well as a DHS Inspector General report, have painted an inaccurate and incomplete picture of AFS's performance under the contract. We share the concerns expressed by CBP that the Inspector General's report mischaracterizes the nature of the contract and the progress made on this project, while ignoring the real and lasting value we have provided to CBP.

This is a performance-based contract. It is based on a pay-per-hire model under which AFS receives payment only when it hires CBP agents and officers. As noted, 93 percent of the

overall contract is not guaranteed. More specifically, AFS receives approximately \$40,000 per agent or officer hire. The payment is tied to reaching key milestones: 80 percent of the \$40,000 is paid when the applicant accepts the offer, and the remaining 20 percent is paid once the applicant reports for duty. To date, approximately \$2 million was in performance fees for attracting and processing 56 individuals who accepted job offers with CBP.

The only part of the contract that is guaranteed to AFS are payments specifically tied to start-up, security, and transition costs, and to date, AFS has been paid approximately \$19 million related to these transition and security requirements, including building an infrastructure for CBP to better market to, track, and serve applicants. This technology is reusable and will permit CBP to attract a larger number of qualified applicants who are receiving more personalized support and staying in the recruiting process longer. We understand that CBP is now using these innovations and the recruitment technology that we have introduced for all of their applicants in other hiring efforts and will continue to be able to do so in the future.

That said, by the end of last summer, our forecasted hiring timelines did not show the acceleration in the hiring process that both CBP and AFS wanted to see. We immediately engaged with CBP to address these challenges, and we are continuing to work in partnership with CBP to determine how we can best support their mission.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with three thoughts. First, AFS delivered real value to CBP by developing and deploying leading commercial capabilities to the recruiting process, which CBP can still use even if our role in the hiring process changes. Second, we want to reiterate that AFS has not been paid for any services we did not undertake, or any accomplishments that we did not achieve. Third, we are working closely with CBP, as we have

done from day one, as it considers the best path forward. We are committed not just to our clients but to theirs and yours – the taxpayer. We will always strive to meet their goals.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer your questions.