



**UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

**STATEMENT OF  
STEPHEN BILLY  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF  
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

**before the**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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**June 27, 2019**

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Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Meadows, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss with you today the Administration's plan to modernize the infrastructure that supports our merit-based civil service system and the entire Federal workforce.

I appear before you today just weeks after Acting Director Margaret Weichert testified before this Subcommittee. At that hearing the Committee expressed the need for additional information to help provide clarity behind the proposed reform. In our efforts to further accommodate the Committee, and be as transparent as possible, OPM has redoubled our efforts and is in the process of continuing to gather and provide additional responsive documents for the Committee.

The discussion during the recent hearing clarified that broad and bi-partisan agreement exists that fundamental changes are needed to ensure we are capable of meeting the responsibility entrusted to us under the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 to promote an efficient civil service.

There is reason for optimism that now, possibly for the first time in decades, Congress seems willing to acknowledge root causes in a way that will further the ability of the Executive Branch to manage the federal personnel system and advance merit system principles through improvements in hiring, re-skilling, performance management, and the processing of retirement and healthcare benefits.

OPM is committed to continuing to work with the Subcommittee and providing you information. As the Acting Director expressed last month, OPM leadership fully respects the oversight function of Congress and this Committee. In line with Chairman Connolly's desire for a reset on

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the OPM reorganization discussions, OPM is committed to continuing to engage with Members of the Committee and committee staff.

In fact, the agency has already invited multiple Members of Congress to visit our offices for a briefing on the OPM Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and retirement operations, and would look forward to having the Chairman and any other interested members of this Subcommittee participate in that briefing. Acting Director Weichert was pleased to host Ranking Member Meadows just last week for this briefing and his staff conveyed to us that, “the visit really highlighted the operational challenges facing OPM,” and they were highly impressed by the commitment to service of OPM employees. OPM leadership shares this view of our employees. There is no substitute for seeing first-hand the hard work of our Federal employees as they overcome technological barriers to serve the American people, and we see this briefing as a critical way to continue the dialogue between Congress and OPM.

Additionally, we are compiling thousands of pages of information to share with the Committee. While we must strive to respect Executive branch interests, we are also committed to continuing to engage with the Subcommittee members and staff to provide information and receive constructive feedback on the reorganization proposal.

As you are aware, the transfer of the OPM background investigations function and related staff and resources to the Department of Defense derives from a Congressional mandate. This transfer will create a funding gap for OPM that compounds existing structural challenges that the agency faces.

On June 13, OPM and DoD held a tollgate meeting to finalize the DoD “buyback” of general services OPM would continue to provide to support background investigation operations during Fiscal Year 2020, after the background investigations mission has been transferred to DoD. That same afternoon, OPM staff briefed staff of this committee and others on those deliberations.

That is an example of our commitment to transparency and engagement with Congress, and what we will continue to display moving forward.

Thank you for having me here today. OPM leadership is heartened that Congress has acknowledged the fundamental issues facing our Agency, and we are optimistic that together we can work toward solutions. I look forward to answering your questions and continuing to engage with the Committee as we work together toward reforms that best serve the American people.