

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

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<http://oversight.house.gov>

MEMORANDUM

September 23, 2019

To: Members of the Subcommittee on Government Operations

Fr: Committee Staff

Re: Hearing on “NextGen Feds: Recruiting the Next Generation of Public Servants”

On Wednesday, September 25, 2019, at 2:00 p.m., in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee will hold a hearing to assess how to build the most effective federal workforce for the 21st century.

I. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE HEARING

The need to recruit and train the next generation of federal employees has never been greater because the current workforce is aging and approaching retirement age. According to data compiled by the Office of Personnel Management, the average age of federal employees has steadily increased over the past two decades, with the average age being 47.5 in 2017.¹ In 2017, 69% of the federal workforce was 40 years and older, compared to 54% of the total civilian labor force in the United States.² At the end of 2018, only 6% of the federal workforce was under the age of 30, while 24% of the civilian U.S. labor force was under 30.³

The Government Accountability Office found that “agencies face a potential risk related to retirement, particularly among the Senior Executive Service (SES). ... If turnover is not strategically managed and succession plans are not in place, gaps can develop in an agency’s institutional knowledge and leadership as experienced employees retire.”⁴

¹ Office of Personnel Management, *Data, Analysis & Documentation, Full-Time Permanent Age Distributions* (September 2017) (online at www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/data-analysis-documentation/federal-employment-reports/reports-publications/full-time-permanent-age-distributions/)

² Government Accountability Office, *Federal Workforce: Key Talent Management Strategies for Agencies to Better Meet Their Missions* (March 2019) (GAO-19-181) (online at www.gao.gov/assets/700/698084.pdf).

³ Partnership for Public Service, *A Profile of the Federal Workforce* (August 2017) (online at https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FedFigures_FY18-Workforce.pdf).

⁴ Government Accountability Office, *Federal Workforce: Key Talent Management Strategies for Agencies to Better Meet Their Missions* (March 2019) (GAO-19-181) (online at www.gao.gov/assets/700/698084.pdf).

The hearing will examine the need for agencies to identify current and future skills gaps and establish strategic plans to fill those gaps, opportunities to attract a young, skilled workforce, and methods to engage federal employees at the beginning of their careers.

II. WITNESSES

Panel One

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney

Member of Congress
12th District of New York
U.S. House of Representatives

Panel Two

Robert Goldenkoff

Director of Strategic Issues
Government Accountability Office

Margot Conrad

Director
Federal Workforce Programs
Partnership for Public Service

Anthony M. Reardon

National President
National Treasury Employees Union

Rachel Greszler

Research Fellow
The Heritage Foundation

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