



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

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Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Meadows and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to participate in the discussion today on recruiting and hiring the workforce of the future.

I am Margot Conrad, director for federal recruiting and hiring programs at the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to inspire a new generation to serve and transform the way government works through leadership development, government modernization and employee engagement. My testimony today will build on testimony the Partnership has previously provided to the subcommittee to help improve talent pipelines to public service, develop strong leaders to manage our agencies and their workforces, and highlight success across government.¹

Barriers to Federal Employment

The federal government needs great talent to serve in a variety of positions across the government and at all levels. Unfortunately, that talent is hard to come by, especially when it comes to young people. Just 6 percent of all permanent, full-time employees in government are under the age of 30, a decline from 9 percent of employees under 30 at the start of this decade. In comparison, about 21 percent of all private sector employees are under the age of 30. In leading technology companies, the number of employees in their 20's often exceeds 50 percent. In the U.S. government, though, the government-wide IT workforce has five times as many employees over the age of 60 than under the age of 30.

Both the world and the workplace are rapidly changing. Our government needs a new generation of young people to serve in a data- and technology-driven environment, with expertise in such sectors as science, technology, engineering, finance, cybersecurity and health care. Making the federal government an “employer of choice” requires greater awareness by the government of what employees want in the workplace, coupled with improved public perception of opportunities in federal service.

As the federal government struggles to attract students and recent graduates, it is clear that more must be done to improve the government’s “brand.” Government shutdowns, hiring freezes and negative rhetoric damage the image of government and the people who serve. A 2017 Universum survey found that only 14 percent of college students identified government agencies as their preferred destination.² The federal government needs to do more to showcase the incredible array of professional opportunities it offers, and also recognize the accomplishments and innovation of the current workforce. By not recognizing success in government, the perception persists that government lacks innovation, creativity, and is not a place for the tech-savvy, STEM-minded, and other forward-looking talent that government needs to attract. The Partnership’s annual Service to America Medals, or *Sammies* program,

¹ “Testimony of Max Stier, President and CEO, Partnership for Public Service.” Hearing on “Workforce for the 21st Century: Analyzing the President’s Management Agenda,” House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, May 16, 2018. Retrieved from <https://republicans-oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Stier-PublicService-Statement-PMA-5-16.pdf>

² Universum, “Universum Talent Research 2017,” 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.career.arizona.edu/sites/career.arizona.edu/files/documents/2017%20Universum%20Survey.pdf>

helps address this lack of recognition by highlighting the unique accomplishments of those in our federal workforce.

The Partnership runs *Call to Serve*, the only national network that brings federal agencies together with nearly a thousand institutions of higher learning to promote federal service and recruit the next generation of public servants. Our experience has shown that many agencies have not built and sustained strategic partnerships with diverse talent sources in communities or with colleges and universities, which is critical to building talent pipelines for their organization over time. In addition, many agencies have not aligned their recruitment cycle with the private sector and are often recruiting for talent late in the school year when students already have private sector offers in hand. This puts the public sector well-behind the private sector in competing for top talent. USAJOBS – the online portal for federal job applications – despite fixes and revamps, is still a difficult website to navigate, and ranks at the bottom of Forrester’s 2018 US Federal Customer Experience Index.³

Many federal agencies are missing the opportunity to use internships as a pipeline for talent. Here in Congress, internships are an accepted and valuable stepping stone toward a permanent position. High-performing companies also foster the next generation of talent through internships. Unfortunately, use of internships has plummeted across the federal government as a whole.

Behind the scenes, government also needs to change its own culture around workforce planning, recruiting, hiring and retaining talent. Strategic human capital management has been on the Government Accountability Office’s (GAO) High Risk list since 2001 and remains on the list because agencies are not doing enough to address critical skills gaps. The federal government is behind the curve in planning to hire in fields such as cybersecurity and data analytics. With the evolution of agencies’ missions, the changing nature of work and the adoption of automation and new technologies, agencies have not done the work to understand what their future workforce needs will be and put a plan in place to attract talent with new skills from outside government, as well as develop and retain talent from within government’s ranks.

The January 2019 interim report of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service identified one of the biggest barriers to pursuing a career in public service to be the personnel practices currently in place.⁴ This conclusion is reinforced by other research – for example, GAO’s finding that over 100 hiring authorities exist, yet relatively few are used with regularity. It is clear that the current hiring process is complicated not only for applicants, but for agency hiring managers and human resources staff as well.⁵

Agencies also operate in a world of “haves” and “have nots,” thanks to the special hiring and pay authorities that are granted only to some offices and agencies but not others. For example, the Securities and Exchange Commission and other financial services agencies can offer more

³ Parrish, Rick, “The US Federal Government Still Ranks Near the Bottom of Forrester’s Customer Experience Index” Forrester, May 31, 2018. Retrieved from <https://go.forrester.com/blogs/the-us-federal-government-still-ranks-near-the-bottom-of-forresters-customer-experience-index/>

⁴ National Commission on Military, National and Public Service, “Interim Report: A Report to the American People, the Congress, and the President,” January 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.inspire2serve.gov/NCOS%20Interim%20Report.pdf>

⁵ Government Accountability Office, “Federal Hiring: OPM Needs to Improve Management and Oversight of Hiring Authorities.” GAO-16-521, August 2, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-521>

competitive pay to attract talent that may consider the private sector instead. The result is a government where many agencies without additional authorities are unable to compete effectively for the talent they need.

Given this complex maze, the average time-to-hire across government for fiscal 2017 was just under 106 days, longer than the average of 87 days agencies achieved overall in fiscal 2012.⁶ Agencies have the authority to share “certificates” – or, in layman’s terms, the list of final candidates – for open positions, as a result of legislation enacted in 2016, which would streamline hiring. However, agencies have yet to take advantage of this authority.⁷ In addition, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has found that more than half of all competitive eligible certificates do not have a hire made from them, which may indicate that hiring managers are frequently dissatisfied with the candidates who have made the final cut. This reflects 2018 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) results that only 42 percent of respondents believe their work unit can recruit people with the right skills. To recruit and hire the next generation, government needs a new mindset for creating talent pipelines and transforming the hiring process.

Creating Talent Pipelines

Creating effective talent pipelines to government requires an understanding of what people are looking for in an employer. We know that young people are interested in mission-driven work and want to feel like they are making an impact with their skills in the workforce. Opportunities for professional development, greater mobility and rotational programs are helpful to create a diverse experience for a younger workforce not looking for a lifetime career in one organization. Here are some ways agencies and Congress can be forward-looking when thinking about bringing in new talent:

- **Promote the mission:** The federal government, because of budget constraints, will always have a hard time competing with the private sector on pay, but agencies almost always have an advantage in offering employees a sense of mission. Our *Best Places to Work*[®] rankings regularly show that the match between employee skills and agency mission is a key driver of employee engagement, second only to effective leadership. Too often, though, federal job announcements are dry, confusing and fail to inspire. The Partnership has identified bright spots in marketing, though, such as NASA’s custom-built career website, which supplements USAJOBS and showcases their mission, including through videos from current employees sharing their stories.⁸ NASA understood that, to attract professionals in STEM fields, the agency needed to set itself apart from other employers by focusing on its unique mission and impact. Other agencies, such as the Department of the Interior, leverage social media platforms to

⁶ “Testimony of Mark Reinhold, Associate Director for Employee Services, Office of Personnel Management.” Hearing on “Examining Federal Managers’ Role in Hiring,” Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, March 1, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Mark%20Reinhold%20TESTIMONY1.pdf>

⁷ “Competitive Service Act of 2015,” 5 U.S.C. Ch 33 §3318.

⁸ Partnership for Public Service and Salesforce, “Tech to Hire: Transforming Federal HR Beginning with Recruiting and Hiring,” October 2018, 3. Available at <https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Tech-to-Hire.pdf>

promote their missions and the work of their agency. All agencies should look for creative ways to highlight their work.

- **Use internships as talent pipelines:** As noted above, the federal government lags in its use of internships as a talent pipeline, as new hires of student interns in government fell from 35,000 in 2010 to 4,000 in 2018.⁹ We encourage the committee to conduct oversight to determine why there has been a decline in the number of student interns and identify ways to strengthen the intern programs. For example, agencies should be allowed to convert interns who come to the agency through third-party internship programs. We also encourage Congress to ensure implementation of the provision of last year's National Defense Authorization Act that authorizes government-wide expedited direct hire authority for students and recent graduates.¹⁰ Use of this new authority is subject to a cap, and OPM identified a technical drafting error in the language establishing the cap that would result in very few or no young people being hired under the new authority. In the conference report to the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2020, Congress should adopt a provision contained in the House-passed version of the bill that provides a technical clarification to the cap so that agencies can use it as intended.

Additionally, we encourage agencies to ensure that internships are a key component of their workforce plans and that they are setting aside full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to hire interns and convert them to full-time employees. The Partnership recently conducted a study of federal recruiting and hiring in the state of California and found that hiring officials and hiring managers are often discouraged from using the Pathways Internship Program because interns take up a full-time employee slot. In some cases headquarters controls the allocation of Pathways positions and field offices feel they don't have access to them.¹¹

- **Leverage colleges and universities:** Government should ensure colleges, universities and other educational institutions are aware of the skills needed in government now and in the future, and should partner with agencies around curriculum development and delivery. For example, at least 20 universities are offering a graduate-level class, Hacking for Defense, to prepare students for jobs in the military, the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community upon graduation.¹² Through the class, students have the chance to solve real-world problems that are submitted by the agencies and, in the process, get exposed to the work they may be doing.

Agencies should also look to create a presence on campus through in-person and virtual recruitment events. One great example is the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which trains employees around the country to recruit on behalf of their agency.

⁹ Office of Management and Budget, "Analytical Perspectives: Strengthening the Federal Workforce," 2019. Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ap_7_strengthening-fy2020.pdf

¹⁰ "John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019," 5 U.S.C. Ch 31 §3115.

¹¹ Partnership for Public Service, "California's Talent Gap: Recruiting and Hiring A New Generation of Federal Employees," September 2019. Available at <https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Californias-Talent-Gap.pdf>

¹² Hacking for Defense, "Government Information," 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.h4di.org/government.html>

Their website lists more than 150 schools they plan to visit this fall. Recruiters host information sessions, presentations, and attend career fairs, which helps the FDIC fill entry-level positions.

- **Improve the application process and USAJOBS:** While OPM has made important strides in improving the government-wide portal for job applications, the site could be better designed to match individuals with open jobs, narrow pools of applicants for agencies, explain the federal employment process to applicants, and keep applicants apprised of their application. Report language accompanying the House fiscal 2020 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill directs OPM to reduce barriers to federal employment, minimize delays in the hiring process, and report on how it will use applicant feedback to improve the user experience.¹³ Congress should hold OPM to these improvements to take the user experience into consideration. OPM also should consider ways to allow agencies to data-mine information on individuals with noncompetitive eligibility (e.g., Peace Corps and VISTA alumni) as well as interns who are eligible for conversion to the competitive service so agencies can look at these candidate pools and fill positions more quickly.
- **Make information on internship programs more accessible:** Conversations with students and recent graduates reveal that it's difficult to find information on open internship positions, understand which agencies are looking for top talent and figure out when positions are open. Agencies should be required to post internship and student programs (Pathways and non-Pathways internships) on USAJOBS and make them easily searchable with clear points of contact at the agency to help interested applicants. Based on legislation introduced by Rep. Connolly,¹⁴ the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2012 required agencies to appoint internship coordinators and for OPM to post information on internship coordinators, the application procedures and deadlines for internship programs,¹⁵ but this information does not appear to be readily available. Publishing this information online and making it accessible will help more students, recent graduates and young people identify opportunities to intern with government.
- **Effectively use student loan forgiveness:** Crushing student loan debt deters many young people from entering public service. Congress has tried to address this problem through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, but the program has not been implemented in a way envisioned by Congress. This needs to be fixed, and agencies need to do a better job helping students and recent graduates make use of PSLF. Agencies should also make effective use of other existing federal student loan forgiveness and repayment tools.
- **Promote innovative talent models:** This year, the Partnership collaborated with Mastercard, Microsoft, Workday and a dozen federal agencies to establish the Cybersecurity Talent Initiative, which aims to build the next generation of cyber leaders

¹³ "Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill, 2020," H. Rept. 116-122, accompanying H.R. 3351, 116th Congress, 2019.

¹⁴ "Federal Internship Improvement Act," H.R.914, 112th Congress, 2011.

¹⁵ "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012," 5 U.S.C. Ch.31 §3111a.

for our country. This innovative cross-sector opportunity enables recent graduates to spend two years working for and receiving training in the federal government in a cyber-related position. At the end of two years, they will have an opportunity to apply for a position with one of the corporate partners and, if hired, will be eligible to receive student loan assistance up to \$75,000 from their private sector employer. This model is the first of its kind. We are currently recruiting our first cohort and are visiting 30 campuses across the country to promote the program. One benefit of these efforts is that we are educating young people about cyber careers across sectors and are helping them learn about organizations and missions they may have never heard of before.

Other federal programs like the U.S. Digital Service, 18F, and Presidential Innovation Fellows allow “technical tours of duty” with the federal government and are unique in helping promote and respond to an increasing desire for the next generation to be more mobile in their careers. The programs provide a model for filling other “hard-to-fill” positions in government.¹⁶

- ***Provide temporary and term appointments:*** The federal government could do a better job of providing mobility within federal service and tapping into the talent of individuals who want to serve for shorter tenures. Legislation introduced last Congress sought to enhance the ability of agencies to use temporary and term appointments to address short-term needs.¹⁷ Congress should consider similar legislation to attract talent for short-term stints and help bring diversity of thought into government projects.
- ***Allow a “passport” option for federal employment:*** Currently, former career federal employees may be non-competitively reinstated to a position within the federal government, but only to a job at or below the grade level last held. Those who leave government may be more qualified thanks to additional experience outside government, but current practice does not help bring in talent noncompetitively. Agencies should be provided the ability to noncompetitively rehire former federal employees to positions for which they qualify.

Transforming the Hiring Process

The passage of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 marked the last time that Congress comprehensively reformed federal personnel management. The creation of the federal pay and classification structure dates back even further, to 1949. In today’s fast-paced, knowledge-based world, the U.S. government still operates in a decades-old system designed for a bygone workforce that was largely clerical. The government’s way of managing talent makes little sense for today’s workforce, which increasingly is comprised of individuals with professional and technical skills.

Congress and agency leaders need to consider what can be done to create a modern civil service. The Partnership’s 2014 report, *Building the Enterprise: A New Civil Service Framework*

¹⁶ Partnership for Public Service, “Mobilizing Tech Talent: Hiring Technologists to Power Better Government,” September 2018. Available at https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Mobilizing_Tech_Talent-2018.09.26.pdf

¹⁷ “Temporary and Term Appointments Act of 2017,” S. 1886, 115th Congress, 2017.

proposed a comprehensive overhaul of not only the hiring process in government, but also ways to modernize pay, job classification and create a more unified federal enterprise, while maintaining the merit system principles.¹⁸ While this comprehensive modernization is still needed – more urgently than ever – here are specific steps that Congress, OPM and agencies can take to improve the hiring process:

- **Create an environment for agency workforce planning:** Agency leaders (political and career) should be forward-thinking for their talent needs and engaged in workforce planning for their organizations. Plans should include projected future needs of the organization and data on the workforce to determine what positions and skill sets are required to meet critical missions and recruitment strategies. Current efforts have failed to address critical skills gaps within agencies, which GAO has noted contribute to several other high-risk areas including the 2020 Decennial Census, NASA’s Acquisition Management, and Ensuring the Cybersecurity of our Nation.¹⁹ Additionally, agencies need to anticipate future changes to the nature of work due to new trends such as artificial intelligence. In a recent, report we identified more than 80 different occupations and more than 130,000 federal workers for which data shows there is a substantial opportunity to transform work through AI.²⁰ OPM should lead workforce planning efforts across the federal enterprise and agencies should develop their own strategies to close skills gaps within the workforce.
- **Review existing hiring authorities:** Over 100 hiring authorities have been created, yet few are fully utilized. For the long term, Congress should rationalize and consolidate authorities into a more limited set that embody the best features of existing hiring processes. Meanwhile, HR and hiring managers need training on the different authorities to understand which authorities are most effective for each hiring scenario. Agencies should also be collecting and analyzing data on their use of hiring authorities to help inform future recruiting and hiring decisions.
- **Commit to diversity, equity and inclusion:** Diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace help organizations innovate and be successful. Agencies should train employees on diversity, equity and inclusion, while also using recruiting strategies to reach diverse talent. And because diversity in the federal workforce drops off dramatically²¹ at the higher end of the General Schedule and in the Senior Executive Service (SES), agency leaders need to pay particular attention to increasing diversity in the higher echelons of the civil service.

¹⁸ Partnership for Public Service and Booz Allen Hamilton, “Building the Enterprise: A New Civil Service Framework,” April 2014. Available at https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Building_the_Enterprise_A_New_Civil_Service_Framework-2014.04.01.pdf

¹⁹ Government Accountability Office, “High Risk Series: Substantial Efforts Needed to Achieve Greater Progress on High-Risk Areas,” GAO-19-157SP, March 6, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-157sp>

²⁰ Partnership for Public Service and IBM Center for the Business of Government, “More than Meets AI: Assessing the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Work of Government,” February 2019. Available at <https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/More-Than-Meets-AI.pdf>

²¹ Partnership for Public Service, “Fed Figures 2019: A Snapshot of the Federal Workforce,” 2019. Available at <https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Looking-Inward-for-Talent.pdf>

- **Make direct hire authority more effective:** Direct hiring authority is a streamlined hiring procedure that is effective in hiring for hard-to-fill positions. Currently, the standard for justifying use of direct hire authority (found in 5 U.S.C. § 3304(a)(3)(B)) is that there must be a shortage of “minimally qualified” candidates. The standard, rather, should be that there is a shortage of “highly qualified” candidates. Additionally, the agencies themselves – who best know their workforce needs – should have latitude to use direct hire authority without prior OPM permission.

Strengthen HR: To make any hiring reform possible, agency chief human capital officers need to play an integral role in mission planning, including identifying and closing critical skills gaps. Agencies must maintain strong HR offices with adequate resources to recruit, develop and retain talent, aided by access to technologies that improve recruiting, hiring, and the entire lifecycle of workforce management. Specialists within their agencies should also be “internal consultants” on the hiring practices (and special hiring authorities) available to their organization. HR also should actively engage hiring managers throughout the hiring process. Congress can help ensure that agency HR offices have the resources they need to be successful.

- **Involve subject matter experts in the hiring process:** A recent partnership between U.S. Digital Service and OPM piloted a “Technical Subject Matter Expert Hurdled Assessment” process, which used subject matter experts, with HR specialists, to conduct resume review and interview assessments. This helped provide a more targeted list of candidates for positions. Building on the success of this USDS pilot, OPM issued guidance this month to agencies calling for more effective assessment strategies to assist in the hiring process. Specifically, OPM called on agencies to involve subject matter experts in the assessment process and directed agencies to take a “deeper dive” to address competencies needed to perform work successfully.²²

Retaining Top Talent

The government not only needs to work harder to recruit and hire great talent, but also to retain it. Even within the constraints of the federal pay system, the government can pursue multiple strategies to make the government the employer of choice not only for entry-level talent but also for mid- and senior-level talent.

- **Promote employee engagement:** OPM’s annual FEVS, which provides the basis of the Partnership’s *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government*[®] rankings, provides the most complete insight into how employees view their jobs and the agencies in which they work. Agency leaders – both political and career, and in both the executive and legislative branches – should learn how to mine and act on this data, which point to best practices and areas of agency performance in need of improvement. For example, in reviewing data from over a three-year period from nearly 150 medical centers operated

²² Office of Personnel Management, “Improving Federal Hiring through the Use of Effective Assessment Strategies to Advance Mission Outcomes,” September 13, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.chcoc.gov/sites/default/files/OPM%20Memo%20Improving%20Federal%20Hiring%20through%20the%20Use%20of%20Effective%20Assessment%20Strategies%20to%20Advance%20Mission%20Outcomes.pdf>

by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Partnership found that the centers with stronger employee engagement had lower turnover among registered nurses.²³

- **Think outside the box:** While traditional retention bonuses can be effective, agencies also need to think of other ways to meet needs of employees, which in turn drives retention. For example, the Department of Homeland Security, whose employees face extremely challenging circumstances in the workplace, has put a special emphasis on employees and their families as a cornerstone of the department's retention strategy. DHS is developing a suite of programs to address employee needs in areas such as stress, mental health, personal relationships, and financial concerns.²⁴
- **Create a development path for career leaders and a culture of continual learning, reskilling and upskilling:** The military treats personnel as an asset, and the military services assiduously develop leaders through training and careful planning of career opportunities. The rest of government often views personnel as a cost, and civilian agencies devote little time and resources to training and leadership development. As a result, only 36.7 percent of federal employees are satisfied with their opportunity to get a better job within their organization.²⁵ Our recent look at reskilling and upskilling in both government and the private sector reaffirms the importance of these efforts in the Presidents Management Agenda.²⁶
- **Create public-private talent exchanges:** Providing an opportunity for an exchange of talent from the private sector to work in the public sector, and vice versa, is a valuable way to improve knowledge across sectors and increase their understanding of one another. Moreover, the opportunity for agencies to offer professional development through a talent exchange could be a useful retention incentive. This authority already exists for the Department of Defense through the fiscal 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, and legislation this year would create a similar program within the intelligence community.²⁷ Congress should expand government-wide these talent exchange authorities.

²³ Partnership for Public Service and BCG, "A Prescription for Better Performance: Engaging Employees at VA Medical Centers," March 2019. Available at https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BPTW18_VA-issue-brief.pdf

²⁴ "Testimony of Angie Bailey, Chief Human Capital Officer, Department of Homeland Security." Hearing on "Solutions to Improve Federal Hiring," Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management, July 30, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Bailey%20TESTIMONY1.pdf>

²⁵ Based on Partnership for Public Service analysis of data from the Office of Personnel Management, "Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey: Governmentwide Management Report," 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/governmentwide-reports/governmentwide-management-report/governmentwide-report/2018/2018-governmentwide-management-report.pdf>

²⁶ Partnership for Public Service and General Assembly, "Looking Inward for Talent: Retraining Employees for Tomorrow's Jobs," September 2019. Available at <https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Looking-Inward-for-Talent.pdf>

²⁷ "Damon Paul Nelson and Matthew Young Pollard Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 2018, 2019, and 2020," H.R. 3494, 116th Congress, 2019.

- **Conduct exit surveys:** When people do leave government, agencies should be collecting data on their reasons for departing or taking another job. Currently, only a government-wide exit survey exists for SES. Data on *why* people leave government will be instrumental in helping agencies better recruit and retain the next generation. The surveys would be particularly useful in understanding why almost half of people who quit working for the federal government leave within two years.²⁸
- **End crisis budgeting:** The recent 35-day federal government shutdown was the longest in our nation's history. Our new report, *Shutdown Letdown*, shows that the shutdown has posed a real risk to our government's ability to recruit and retain high-quality talent.²⁹ Our research found deep concern among federal leaders that the lengthy shutdown contributed to the perception that the civil service is not valued and that government may not be a reliable employer. We encourage Congress to pass legislation that will establish an automatic continuing resolution, a predictable budget process and make short-term, crisis budgets a thing of the past.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, inspiring a new generation to consider careers in the federal government and hiring a world-class workforce are not possible without effective leadership. *The Best Places to Work*[®] rankings consistently show leadership to be the key driver to employee engagement, which means this is the key ingredient we need to create talent pipelines, transform the recruitment and hiring process and retain top talent. Your leadership, and the focus of this subcommittee on recruiting the next generation of talent, is extremely important and is the first step toward an enterprise-wide focus on breaking down barriers, recognizing and replicating success and transforming our current system.

Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Meadows, and members of the subcommittee, thank you again for holding this hearing on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to find constructive solutions to help recruit the next generation of public servants.

²⁸ Office of Personnel Management, "Dynamics Data: Separations Trends Cubes, FY 2011-FY2018," Data filtered by fulltime, non-seasonal, permanent employees from Chief Financial Officer Act agencies. Retrieved from <https://www.fedscope.opm.gov/separations.asp>

²⁹ Partnership for Public Service, "Shutdown Letdown: How the Longest Shutdown in U.S. History Did Lasting Damage to Our Government and the People It Serves," September 2019. Available at <https://ourpublicservice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Shutdown-Letdown.pdf>