



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

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1100 New York Ave NW Suite 200 East Washington DC 20005

July 17, 2017

The Honorable Mark Meadows
United States House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Meadows:

On behalf of the Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to making government more effective for the American people, I am pleased to support your legislation to strengthen the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

The FEVS, as well as the Partnership's *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government Rankings*®, which utilize FEVS data, represents an invaluable source of information for federal managers, Congress, good government stakeholders, and the general public. It is, quite simply, the best tool available for assessing the health of federal organizations, identifying emerging morale issues, and discerning agency-specific and government-wide engagement trends over time. And, thanks in part to the attention that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has brought to employee morale through the FEVS, as well as the focus of policymakers like you, employee satisfaction in the federal government has increased each of the last two years.

However, OPM's recent regulation shortening the survey by removing certain questions threatens to undermine its value. One of the great benefits of the FEVS is that it offers snapshots of employee morale over time. Significant changes to the survey instrument limit the ability to measure these trends and make it a less useful tool overall. By requiring OPM to notify Congress in advance of changes to the survey and their potential impact, the bill will ensure that alterations to the FEVS strengthen the integrity of the current survey while protecting its future value. Further, the provision requiring OPM to report survey data by occupation, which happens to a limited extent already, will help government better understand the concerns of mission-critical employees like cyber security specialists, physicians, and law enforcement officers.

Fundamentally, the underlying statute authorizing the FEVS must be modernized if it is to continue to be a useful resource. To that end, I urge you to consider including a requirement that OPM, rather than individual agencies, perform the survey annually. The Office already conducts the survey on behalf of the vast majority of agencies, so this change would reflect current practice. Placing the survey in Title 5 along with the responsibility to report to Congress prior to any change to the survey simply reinforces OPM's role as the *de facto* administrator. In this context, giving OPM statutory ownership simply makes sense.

Chairman Meadows, thank you for your leadership on this legislation and your commitment to improving the morale and effectiveness of our federal workforce. The Partnership believes this bill is critical to protecting and strengthening the FEVS, and we are proud to support it.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Max Stier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Max" and the last name "Stier" clearly distinguishable.

Max Stier
President and CEO