



**PARTNERSHIP
FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**

Better government. Stronger democracy.

The Partnership for Public Service's Vision for a Better Government

The performance of our government depends on two million federal civil servants dedicated to serving the public interest and carrying out the policies of our elected leaders. These are the people who safeguard our national security, protect public health, help individuals access essential benefits, provide assistance after natural disasters and keep us safe when we travel.

There are those who want to fundamentally alter the purpose of the federal civil service by giving a president and political appointees the power to arbitrarily fire thousands of professional, nonpartisan career employees and replace them with those considered loyal to the White House. Instead of taking steps to improve government performance, this plan would strip federal agencies of expertise and weaken their ability to provide vital public services.

Important reforms are needed to improve our government, but these can be achieved by making constructive changes, not politicizing and undermining the nonpartisan workforce. The public deserves a government that works for them, and [public opinion surveys](#) show they believe a nonpartisan, merit-based civil service—one that is fair, responsive and accountable—is the best approach.

The Partnership for Public Service believes there are five critical reforms that can be taken by Congress, agencies and the White House to address pressing workforce and management issues that will improve our government's ability to more effectively serve the public. Taken together, these proposals offer a powerful way to create a better government and a stronger democracy.



1. **DEVELOP STRONG GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP**

Our government's career and political leaders need to hold a deep-rooted belief in the value of public service and demonstrate a strong commitment to the public good. They should be stewards of the Constitution, taxpayer dollars and the workforces they lead. Federal leaders, whether career or political, should emphasize the long-term health of their organizations over short-term policy success, be prepared and trained for their roles and held accountable for their work.



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2. **MAKE IT EASIER TO HIRE AND KEEP QUALIFIED PEOPLE**

Our government faces complex demands requiring a skilled workforce, but the ability to attract top, diverse talent is hampered by an arcane, exceedingly slow hiring process. The federal government must invest in a skills first hiring approach to identify, attract and develop qualified employees. The hiring system also must be simplified with many paths for entry, including internships, apprenticeships and early-career opportunities to bring more young talent into government.



3. **HOLD POOR PERFORMERS ACCOUNTABLE**

The current process to fire or discipline poor performers is difficult for managers and confusing for employees. Greater accountability and workplace justice can be achieved by ensuring that managers have the support and the tools to reward outstanding employees and to take action against poor performers. Once individuals are disciplined or terminated, there needs to be a quick review and appeals process. Such a system must provide due process protections to ensure decisions are not politically motivated.



4. **MAKE BETTER USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND DATA**

The government needs to update its aging technology, improve its digital services and use artificial intelligence safely and appropriately to improve internal operations and better serve the public. Agencies also need to expand the use of data to analyze and inform policy decisions, to measure program effectiveness and improve outcomes.



5. **BUILD MODERN, CUSTOMER FRIENDLY SERVICES**

The public expects and deserves fast and equitable government services, whether it's obtaining Social Security benefits, linking veterans to critical healthcare or tracking the status of a request or application. Federal agencies often fall short on delivering high-quality services and must build modern and effective means of communication, listen to their customers and invest in talent to improve the customer experience.