

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA,  
CHAIRMAN

DAN BURTON, INDIANA  
CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT  
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA  
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK  
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA  
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA  
STEVEN C. LATOURETTE, OHIO  
DOUG OSE, CALIFORNIA  
RON LEWIS, KENTUCKY  
JO ANN DAVIS, VIRGINIA  
TODD RUSSELL PLATT, PENNSYLVANIA  
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH  
ADAM H. PUTNAM, FLORIDA  
EDWARD L. SCHROCK, VIRGINIA  
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE  
JOHN SULLIVAN, OKLAHOMA  
NATHAN DEAL, GEORGIA  
CANDICE MILLER, MICHIGAN  
TIM MURPHY, PENNSYLVANIA  
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO  
JOHN R. CARTER, TEXAS  
WILLIAM J. JANKLOW, SOUTH DAKOTA  
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-3974  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051  
TTY (202) 225-6852

[www.house.gov/reform](http://www.house.gov/reform)

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,  
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA  
MAJOR R. OWENS, NEW YORK  
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK  
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK  
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND  
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO  
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS  
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI  
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA  
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS  
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND  
LINDA T. SANCHEZ, CALIFORNIA  
C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER,  
MARYLAND  
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE  
CHRIS BELL, TEXAS

BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT,  
INDEPENDENT

### Chairwoman Jo Ann Davis Subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organization

#### **“The Federal Hiring Process: Shortening The Long and Winding Road” Opening Statement July 13, 2004**

Last month, the Subcommittee held a field hearing in Chicago entitled, “The Federal Hiring Process: The Long and Winding Road,” to try and get to the bottom of why, as OPM estimated, it takes an average of five months (102-business days) to fill a vacancy through the competitive process. OPM appears to be working hard on improving and expediting the hiring process and making it one of its key initiatives. Although I appreciate OPM’s dedication to this area, the hearing revealed that much more has to be done to improve and streamline the hiring process. Hiring top talent in a timely and effective manner should not be a difficult process and I want to see results. The Federal Government cannot keep missing out on the best and brightest applicants merely because of cumbersome job announcements and a lengthy hiring process. I called this follow-up hearing to see how we can move forward in improving the hiring process.

Several important issues were raised during the June 7<sup>th</sup> hearing. First, GAO reported that agencies are making limited use of the two new hiring flexibilities contained in the 2002 Homeland Security Act: category rating and direct-hire authority. This was disturbing to me in light of the fact that many agency officials from across the Federal Government sought these flexibilities. Some of the reasons for the lack of use of these flexibilities include: the lack of agency policies and procedures, lack of OPM guidance, rigid OPM rules and regulations, lack of OPM technical assistance, and concern about possible inconsistencies in the implementation of the flexibilities with the department or agency. OPM and the agencies must work through these obstacles. I am pleased to hear that since our last hearing OPM has provided further guidance to agencies in using these two new flexibilities through the issuance of final regulations, which apparently provide clarification, and just two weeks ago conducted a training symposium for Federal agencies to improve and expedite the hiring process. Agencies must also do their part and be committed to improving the hiring process at their particular agency.

A second problem highlighted at the hearing was the content of job vacancy announcements – which can often obstruct and delay the hiring process. Krystal Kemp, a stellar law student and frustrated applicant for Federal employment testified, “the language of many job announcements was incomprehensible,” “used special government code talk,” and seemed to be written for “people already initiated into the fraternity of government jobs.” OPM and agencies seem to be making strides in improving the content of job vacancy announcements but more work needs to be done to be sure that the Federal Government does not lose top talent - like Krystal Kemp - simply because the postings are too cumbersome.

Another significant issue raised during the last hearing was the apparent lack of any mechanism to keep agencies' hiring methods accountable. It seems there is nothing in place to measure which agencies are doing a good job and which agencies are doing a poor job, including details of individual agencies' time to hire and use of hiring flexibilities. As Deputy Director Blair pointed out, "if you don't measure it, then it won't get done." Agencies' hiring methods should be measured to assist Congress and OPM in improving the hiring process. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses what steps are in place to make this happen.

I am also delighted to have Dr. David Chu here this morning as both Undersecretary for Personnel and Readiness at the Department of Defense and as Chairman of the Chief Human Capital Officers Council Subcommittee on Hiring. In addition to hearing about the challenges the Department faces in hiring talented employees, I look forward to hearing his vision for the Hiring Subcommittee and what actions the Subcommittee is undertaking to improve recruiting and streamlining the hiring process. I very much look forward to hearing from all the witnesses. I thank our witnesses for being here, and I look forward to the discussion on how the Federal Government can keep pace with the private sector and stop losing out on talented employees ready to serve their country.

#####