

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 PLATTIS, 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

#### “We’d Like to See You Smile: The Need for Dental and Vision Benefits (H.R. 3751)” Opening Statement February 24, 2004

Thank you all for joining us today as we take a look at how we can make available better dental and vision benefits for members of the federal family. I know this issue is of great importance to federal employees, retirees and their families – these two benefits are consistently at the top of their wish lists.

Earlier this year, I introduced H.R. 3751, which requires the Office of Personnel Management to study the options for enhancing federal dental and vision benefits and to issue recommendations to Congress by June 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. I felt it was time for OPM to re-evaluate its dental and eye care offerings through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

For reasons that I expect OPM to explain in detail here today, the dental and vision benefits offered through the FEHBP have essentially remained unchanged for about 15 years. A lot has changed in that time – primarily, we have learned a great deal more about the importance of dental and vision care to our overall health.

I think it is a black mark against the federal government that its current dental and vision offerings are so meager.

We have held several hearings in this Subcommittee, and endorsed several pieces of legislation, to assist the federal government in attracting and retaining talented workers. Employee benefits are another piece in this puzzle, because the federal government is lagging behind its competitors. Just look at dental benefits: Nearly every mid-size or large private sector firm offers fairly generous dental care. Federal employees understand this disparity.

My hope is that this hearing, and my introduction of H.R. 3751, can be the start of a collaborative process by which the House, the Senate, the Administration and industry representatives can determine the best way to enhance both dental and vision benefits while maintaining the overall strength of the FEHBP. Thank you.