

**STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN DANNY K. DAVIS AT THE
CIVIL SERVICE AND AGENCY ORGANIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE
HEARING
ON TRANSFORMING THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT: EXPLORING
THE MERITS OF THE PROPOSED NATIONAL SECURITY PERSONNEL SYSTEM**

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Chairwoman Davis, we began this session working in a bipartisan manner to educate ourselves about how best to go about reforming the civil service. Since March 5th, there have been four civil service related hearings, in which we have heard from over thirty witnesses, and sat through hours and hours of testimony.

What I have gleaned from the experts who took time out of their schedules to testify at these hearings is that performance management systems and employee input are imperative to any civil service reform proposal.

This was crystallized for us at the joint House and Senate hearing on civil service reform, where on a bipartisan basis, we, Democrats and Republicans alike, applauded Chairman

Voinavich when he stated, in response to GAO testimony about the President's Human Capital Performance Fund and the importance of performance management systems, "...the worst thing that could happen is that you get started with this thing, and then it is a disaster and everybody points to it and says, "I told you so, it wouldn't work." For those of us that have been through the mill... this is something you have really got to spend a lot of time on to do it right."

Here we are today, at a rushed hearing, ignoring the advise of over thirty witnesses and preparing to give the Department of Defense the authority to do what we were not willing to give the President the authority to do three weeks ago.

If we are not going to spend the time to do it right, why the hearings, why the witnesses, why the countless hours of testimony? The legislative proposal that we are considering today, and, which is scheduled to be marked-up on Thursday, was delivered to Congress only two and a half weeks ago.

In the human capital section of the legislative proposal, it states that DOD's proposal is based upon the Department's Civilian Human Resources Strategic Plan. Just last month, GAO reviewed DOD's Civilian Human Resources Strategic Plan and essentially declared it woefully inadequate.

The GAO report stated, "The human capital strategic plans GAO reviewed for the most part lacked key elements found in fully developed plans. Most of the civilian human capital goals, objectives, and initiatives were not explicitly aligned with the overarching missions of the organizations. Consequently, DOD and the components cannot be sure that the strategic goals are properly focused on mission achievement." And the report goes on, and on. This weak foundation is what the legislative proposal is based on.

Are we moving this legislation because it is good government or because it is politically expedient? DOD, by its own admission, stated in response to GAO's comments that "we

are obligated to point out that a significant portion of the review concentrated on strategic planning activities in the earliest stages of development.”

This is exactly the problem with moving this legislation so quickly. The proposal has no performance management system or safeguards to protect against abuse, and there was no employee input in the development of the proposal.

This proposal will impact 700,000 civilian DOD employees, and employee representatives first saw this legislative proposal earlier this month, about the same time DOD was briefing congressional staff on it.

My staff has reviewed the April 2nd Federal Register notice on DOD’s nine demonstration projects, which DOD says is the basis for their legislative proposal, and which, they state, provides the opportunity for employee comment. I do not consider responding to a Federal Register notice adequate employee input in the development of a plan, not to mention that

what appeared in the Federal Register in no way resembles what is being considered by the Subcommittee today.

In an article in Sunday's Washington Post, a spokesman for Chairman Tom Davis explained that we are rushing to hold this hearing and mark-up because, "The train is leaving the station. Mr. Davis feels like we either drive it or get run over by it."

This train may be leaving the station, but if the Government Reform Committee is to drive it, I would rather we do so down the track leading toward good government, rather than political expediency. By the end of this week, we'll know which track this committee is on.

Thank you.

