

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 28, 2025

Mr. Charles Ezell
Acting Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Acting Director Ezell:

On April 10, 2025, you issued a memo to the heads and acting heads of departments and agencies encouraging them to offer the maximum available salary to political appointees and sidestep the regular hiring process. This memo, coupled with the Administration's widespread layoffs of career government workers who have loyally served in the Executive Branch for Presidents of both political parties, makes clear your intention: fire dedicated public servants in droves, cut essential government services, and use taxpayer dollars to instead hire underqualified and overpaid political cronies.

Since President Trump took office, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has worked with Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to facilitate the firings of tens of thousands of government employees under the guise of government efficiency. The American people have experienced only chaos as a result. The phone lines at Social Security are overwhelmed¹, food inspections are down², and as fire season begins, the Forest Service is planning to layoff wildland firefighters—to name just a few of the consequences of this administration's arbitrary and thoughtless cuts.³ Put simply, OPM's actions have sowed inefficiency and counter-productivity for the essential government services that our constituents depend on.

While this Administration pushes out scores of public servants and guts entire agencies, often in defiance of Congress and federal law, your memo encourages agencies to help install loyalists who have not been properly vetted, in critically important positions—and to pay them at the highest possible rate. As dedicated career public servants are receiving notice that they have been fired, the Administration is offering higher pay for those hired under Schedule C, a type of appointment for those serving in confidential or policy roles, including as confidential assistants, policy experts, special counsel, and schedulers.⁴ Per your memo, agencies may consider setting initial salaries at up to \$195,200, almost five times the median income for individuals in the U.S.⁵ Further, your memo encourages agency heads to sidestep the standard hiring process and remove the objective additional reviewer of candidates. This would allow appointees to begin work in sensitive roles without any vetting, including for conflicts of interest or background

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/08/us/social-security-trump.html>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/fda-food-drug-inspections-layoffs/>

³ <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/04/23/crazy-forest-service-cuts-ignite-fear-fury-over-wildfire-risks-00301499>

⁴ <https://www.opm.gov/information-management/privacy-policy/privacy-policy/escs.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/SEX255223>

checks, bypassing the basic guardrails that have been in place for decades. On its face, OPM's April 10 memo demonstrates a desire for the expeditious hiring of underqualified and overpaid political elites.

Schedule C hires are not career civil servants. They will not be answering phones at Social Security field offices or conducting food inspections or fighting wildfires. They do not work for the American people; they work to advance the political agenda of the President. OPM's April 10 memo makes clear the Trump Administration's ultimate goal is to decimate the nonpolitical career civil service and use taxpayer dollars to enrich and reward political allies, all at the cost of the government services that people rely on.

Padding the pockets of political operatives while firing food safety inspectors is nothing short of an egregious abuse of taxpayer dollars and massively wasteful.

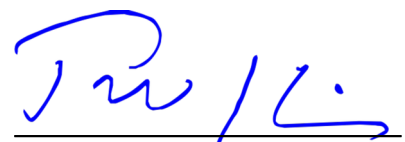
In order to ensure OPM works to actually promote efficiency and productivity in the government workforce, we request you provide the following information:

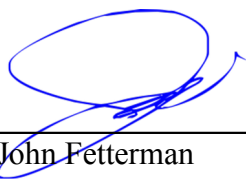
1. The salary information of all Schedule C appointees, and the current number of Schedule C appointees, broken down by agency. For those Schedule C appointees the administration has hired at a pay level of GS-15 or \$195,200, please provide a brief job description for each.
2. The justification for revoking the authority of agency HR departments to set the terms for Schedule C appointment and additional information as to how agencies will set the terms for Schedule C appointment without HR involvement.
3. Any guidance or detail OPM has provided to agencies as to how to set the terms for a Schedule C appointment in order to avoid widespread corruption.
4. The agency-level cost of hiring the desired number of Schedule C appointees.
5. Any written information detailing the role of the Presidential Personnel Office (PPO) in hiring Schedule C appointees.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward receiving your responses no later than June 4, 2025.

Sincerely,


Patty Murray
United States Senator


Tim Kaine
United States Senator

A blue ink signature of John Fetterman, featuring a large, stylized 'J' and 'F'.

John Fetterman
United States Senator

A blue ink signature of Chris Van Hollen, written in a cursive style.

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

A blue ink signature of Mark R. Warner, written in a cursive style.

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

A blue ink signature of Angela D. Alsobrooks, written in a cursive style.

Angela Alsobrooks
United States Senator

A blue ink signature of Alex Padilla, written in a cursive style.

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

A blue ink signature of Richard Blumenthal, written in a cursive style.

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator