

March 12, 2005

Program Executive Office
National Security Personnel System
Attn: Bradley B. Bunn
1400 Key Boulevard
Suite B-200
Arlington, VA 22209-5144

“Comments on Proposed NSPS Regulations – RIN 3206-AK76/0790-AH82”

Dear Mr. Bunn:

I am writing to express my concerns about proposed changes to work rules in the Department of Defense (DOD). The proposed regulations, known as the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), were printed in the Federal Register on February 14, 2005. This message is being copied to my representatives in Congress.

I have worked for the United States Federal Government for almost 28 years and chose the U.S. Federal Government as my employer for many reasons. Significant among those reasons were the facts that the General Schedule provided a clear chart showing expected pay raises, included performance awards to outstanding, provided employee protections and grievance options, incorporated labor unions as partners, and stressed the value of federal employees as public servants. I am among those who have dedicated my working career to hard work, selfless service, and commitment to the public (and the environment, in my present position).

After reviewing the NSPS as published, I am extremely upset: public servants appear to be treated as pieces in some complicated game. Although this publication is almost devoid of specifics, I found it obvious that our rights will be severely curtailed, our promotions and awards subject to the whim of supervisors, and the whole system reverted to the archaic system of favoritism and cronyism, which our current system was designed to eliminate! The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 was written to eliminate many of the inequities which will again become a part of DoD employment, should the NSPS become law.

Annual Pay Raises

Under the General Service and FWS, employee pay was clear. Funded by Congress, it could not be taken away. NSPS will eliminate this certainty. Salaries and bonuses will be funded by DoD, which has been unable to fund its awards program in the past. I am skeptical that with the present crises around the world and our enormous deployment of United States citizens, the DoD will be forced to treat civilian employees as second class citizens concerning pay and awards.

Pay for Performance

Under this new system the amount of a worker's salary will depend almost totally on the personal judgment of his or her manager. We will be forced to compete with our co-workers for pay raises, which will destroy the teamwork we have worked to establish, increase conflict among us, and reward people who play politics and toot their own horns. There will be fewer workplace protections, little incentive for pursuing harassment complaints, and no impartial appeal system. We are much too busy with our responsibilities to spend time protecting ourselves from vindictive behavior and playing office politics in some hope of receiving monetary benefit.

Schedules and Overtime

NSPS will allow managers to schedule employees to work without sufficient advance notice of schedule changes. How will workers with families care of their children? How will employees with elderly parents and/or ill family cope with these requirements? Will a refusal to work result in disciplinary action and possible firing? There is a huge potential for managers to punish employees with schedules and abrupt changes.

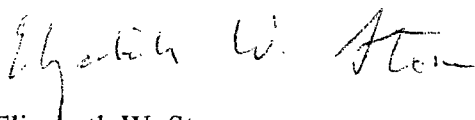
Civilian Deployment

As DoD employees, we could be suddenly assigned anywhere in the world, even in a war zone. We have chosen to serve our country and are proud to do so; we did not enlist in the military. We all have responsibilities and families to which we are committed. Remember that those who enlist in the military, the reserves, and the National Guard made that decision voluntarily. There is no activated draft.

I believe that federal employees are under attack. We are fighting for our basic rights. We are struggling to respond intelligently to a proposal with no specifics. Today we support the military; will our attention be diverted from this vital responsibility in order to save our employment from draconian changes?

I urge the DoD to rethink this proposal. We need work rules that preserve fairness, serve the American people, and respect the rights of Defense Department workers. Please accept to challenge to amend those portions of the present regulations so that hiring the most qualified is quicker, eliminating underperformers is fair and doable, and retaining quality employees is easier.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth W. Stone
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