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11 March 2005

Program Executive Office, NSPS
Attn: Bradley B. Bunn
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Arlington VA 22209-5144

Subject: Proposed NSPS Regulations

I hereby submit my objection to the proposed NSPS regulations. I am opposed to the way that this proposal was brought out and pushed through Congress with almost no notice to anyone. While it was publicized to the civilian workforce after it had passed, I find that my friends and family outside the DOD haven't even heard of it. I request the entire NSPS program be rescinded, and that whatever valid changes are part of it be implemented through the existing Civil Service laws.

After the NSPS was voted in by Congress, civilian employees were notified of Town Hall meetings to be held at Luke AFB on 14 December 2004. A representative was sent in by the DOD to do a Power Point presentation on the NSPS. She provided no details on how the system would work, and she did not answer any of the many questions that were asked, although Luke civilian personnel staff were making note of them. On 10 Feb 05 we received a letter from the base commander, Col Rand, announcing the implementation of the program. It appeared to be a form letter that he was mandated to send out. Yesterday we were sent an e-mail from our long-time, dependable Civilian Personnel Officer with the comment that "Statements being made that we would be earning less money today if NSPS had been implemented three years ago are highly misleading, entirely speculative and not based on language in the proposed regulations." This, too, seemed to be something she was mandated to send out.

I particularly object to the following subparts:

C Pay Sections 9901.301 to 9901.373.

The current system of annual cost-of-living adjustments and periodic within grade step increases for satisfactory performance provides a feeling of stability and an incentive to advance to a higher grade. Grouping everyone in a "pay pool" and requiring them to compete with their co-workers for a "bigger piece of the pie" could change the office atmosphere from one of teamwork to one of "every man/woman for himself." It will also give supervisors an unneeded and probably

dangerous feeling of power and control and will lead to abuses by those who should not have been put in these positions in their first place. While that situation is not in any way applicable at our office, it surely is in some. Who will evaluate their performance?

D Performance Management – 9901.401 to 9901.409

Employees need to retain their option to appeal any performance rating to an independent grievance and arbitration authority. The agency should continue to be responsible for paying legal costs for employees whose appeals were decided in their favor by the Merit System Protection Board.

E Staffing and Employment 9901.501 to 9901.516

The authority given DOD and OPM to jointly create new competitive or excepted appointing authorities for NSPS positions is a dangerous one, and one that could easily be abused by the current administration. It is easy to envision appointees with large salaries creating “empires” for themselves, using up needed defense funds as rewards for campaign contributions. Or at the opposite end of the spectrum, a legitimate hiring authority could hire qualified staff and they would be able to establish their own “appropriate” probationary periods. They could leave an employee on probation for many years, thereby not giving him his rights as a permanent employee. The present three year probationary period works well.

F Workforce Shaping – 9901.6012 to 9901.611.

The present process of dealing with layoffs and RIFs works fine. We recently experienced this in our own office. Both job performance and length of service need to be considered. One person who makes a big impression on a supervisor for one year should not necessarily be chosen over one who has done a satisfactory job for many years. I am among those who do not believe that an employee with “Veteran’s Preference” who consistently does next to nothing to accomplish the unit’s mission should automatically be retained over someone who has no veteran’s preference. I completely agree with the concept that all things being equal, the veteran should have preference.

G Adverse Actions – 9901.701 to 9901.810.

An independent body assigned to review a suspension or termination should be allowed to alter a penalty they have found unreasonable. What is the purpose of reviewing something if there is no provision to change it? NSPS will publish at some unstated future time a list of “Mandatory Removal Offenses.” The Secretary will have the sole, exclusive and unreviewable authority to determine what offenses will require removal as the only acceptable penalty. This is another example of the outrageous expansion of authority/deprivation of civil rights that our government has subjected us to since 9/11.

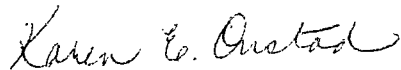
I Labor-Management Relations – 9901.901 to 9901.929.

Management would be prohibited from bargaining over procedures such as suddenly deploying single parents away from the children. They are allowed to consult with the union over such procedures, but after consulting are still free to deviate from the procedures agreed upon.

The right of employees to organize and bargain collectively is one that American workers worked hard for many years to achieve. I am appalled that the present administration feels that this is something that should be taken away from them. Freedom of speech is another right I feel that we are giving up in the name of spreading freedom to other areas of the world.

I respectfully request the NSPS proposal be rejected in its entirety. If this is not possible, please give serious consideration to removing the above clauses.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen E. Onstad".

Karen E. Onstad