

March 1, 2005

Program Executive Office, NSPS  
Attn: Brad Bunn  
1400 Key Boulevard, Suite B-200  
Arlington, Virginia 22209-5144

Dear Sir:

I'd like to comment on the proposed NSPS regulations outlined in your E-mail dated 2/11/2005. I was pleased to note the recent "performance based" changes to the new system. The locality component is offered too rarely and provides little financial relief for those working at the lowest pay scale. In the private sector good employees are rewarded monetarily; it is a standard of fairness that is long overdue at the federal level which lauds seniority. It strikes me that the government is grossly behind the times in its recruiting practices, trying to lure viable candidates, while judging their attributes so narrowly.

I'm a return federal employee at the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA), Northern New England Branch. At the time of my interview, I had nearly two years of prior federal experience. I was recognized as an outstanding scholar at the graduate level with eight months of computer training at a trade school, over ten years of clerical experience, and approximately five years of supervisory experience. Additionally, I've continued my education privately and through Curry College where I've maintained a GPA of 3.9 in Homeland Defense. The human resources department stated that I didn't qualify for the position of Office Automation Assistant at a GS-6, because (twelve years ago) I was GS-4 with the U.S. Small Business Administration, and based on my last job in protective services. Therefore, my education and experience "didn't count" towards anything higher than a GS-5, Step 1, which is ironically, lower than what I was being offered as an entry level teacher in the public schools.

I work with a wonderful group of people that I've come to admire and respect and I wish to remain permanently with the Northeastern Branch to establish a career. I hope one day soon to have the pleasure of working for Supervisory Auditor, Ms. Jo-Anne Corvese, whom I greatly esteem and consider a mentor. In the short time I've been with this office, I've earned the respect of my peers and I've received a positive evaluation from my supervisor; last December I was given a monetary award in recognition of my job performance and professionalism. I worry that I may not be able to afford to remain with this agency long enough to benefit from any of the proposed changes that the DCAA will be implementing.

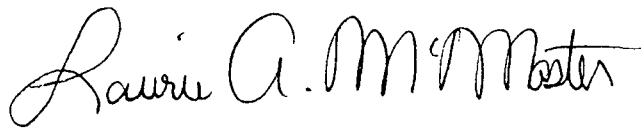
My education has drained my family financially and we're now in the process of trying to sell our home. Prior to joining this agency, I spent three years living below the legal definition of poverty without the benefit of financial assistance. Today I'm still

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unable to repay my parents or to meet my basic living expenses. To advance at this location, I would have to be suddenly cured of my dyscalculia and become an auditor. Otherwise, I would have to leave Lexington to work at the regional branch in Lowell, which is not option I'm willing to pursue. I can't fathom why any candidate with other opportunities available to them would choose to work under such an outdated pay system.

If this agency is sincere in obtaining "quality talent," you need to appreciate all that encompasses each applicant or continue to lose them to private businesses. Thank you for inviting me to write to you. I remain,

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie A. McMaster". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Laurie" being more prominent than the last name "McMaster".

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