# Long-Standing MSPB Vacancies to Get Attention

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The two-year lack of a quorum on the MSPB governing board is to get attention this week on both sides of Capitol Hill, with a planned Senate committee vote on nominees to fill all three seats and a House hearing on the impact of the vacancies.

The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee plans to move directly to a vote on the three nominees without holding a confirmation hearing since they are the same three nominated last year and who underwent a generally cordial hearing–but who never reached a committee vote. The MSPB governing board has been unable to issue decisions on appeals of rulings by the agency’s hearing officers since January 2017 since it has had only one member during that time–who himself has been serving on a temporary extension due to expire.

A subcommittee of the House Oversight and Reform Committee meanwhile has scheduled the first congressional hearing into the impact of the lack of a quorum in that time. The MSPB is the primary body hearing appeals by federal employees of disciplinary actions; it also resolves other workplace disputes including retirement benefits matters and conducts studies into personnel policies and practices.

In some cases employees have appealed hearing officer decisions directly into federal court but a backlog of cases has been building up at the merit board–most recently reported at more than 1,700–an issue the nominees said last year at their nomination hearing would be their first priority if confirmed.

Thank You

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