Panel Sets Priorities for Overseeing Federal Workforce

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Following are the sections of the House Oversight and Reform Committee’s agenda for the current Congress that deal with federal workplace issues.

WORKERS’ RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS

The Committee will examine issues related to the protection of workers’ rights, including issues relating to wages and benefits, employment agreements, working conditions, and the right to organize and bargain collectively.

Since 2011, federal employees have contributed nearly $200 billion to deficit reduction and other government programs. Federal workers have endured pay freezes, hiring freezes, higher pension contributions, and furloughs as a result of sequestration and government shutdowns, including the longest shutdown in our nation’s history.

The Committee will conduct oversight of the Administration’s efforts to weaken collective bargaining rights and employee protections affecting federal workers. The Committee’s oversight will seek to ensure that such efforts do not undermine the statutory right to bargain, the ability of employee unions to represent federal workers, or employee due process rights. The Committee will work to prevent the return of the current merit-based civil service to a patronage system.

The Committee will examine the impact of federal agency vacancies at all levels, staffing reductions, and a lack of diversity and inclusion in the federal workforce on employee engagement, morale, productivity, and agency mission.

Federal employees have the right to work in an environment free from any form of sexual harassment, and they have the right to report allegations of harassment or bullying without fear of retaliation.

The Committee will examine how allegations of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are handled at federal agencies, including the need for legislation to strengthen standards for agency processes used to receive and investigate allegations of harassment and bullying. The Committee will examine ways to improve agency processes for disciplining employees found to have committed sexual misconduct.

POSTAL SERVICE

The Committee will oversee the operations of the United States Postal Service, over which the Committee exercises legislative and oversight jurisdiction. The Postal Service is an essential public institution that connects every family, business, and community in this nation by providing service to more than 157 million delivery points across the United States. The Committee will examine the urgent need for comprehensive reform legislation that can address the Postal Service’s deepening financial challenges while guaranteeing universal service.

In addition, following an individual’s attempt last year to send more than a dozen explosive devices through the U.S. mail to elected officials and media organizations, the Committee will conduct oversight of efforts by the Postal Service to protect its customers and prevent the shipment of explosives and other dangerous items.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

The federal government buys a wide variety of goods and services, from sophisticated weapons systems to cybersecurity tools and services. The Committee will investigate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement and conduct oversight of recent acquisition reforms, including on-line procurement. The Committee will conduct oversight of agency contracting, especially those agencies identified by GAO as ‘‘high risks,’’ to ensure there is appropriate management of taxpayer funds and agencies are effectively using acquisition strategies to achieve policy goals. The Committee will examine how to lower the barriers to entry for small and disadvantaged businesses.

Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Subcommittee on Government Operations intends to conduct robust oversight of many aspects of the Executive Branch, including but not limited to:

• Federal information technology and cybersecurity policy, including compliance with the requirements of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act and the Federal Information Security Management Act;

• Agency compliance with and enforcement of federal labor law;

• The transparency of the Administration’s reorganization plans and their effects on the missions of federal agencies;

• Protections for whistleblowers and the performance of the Merit Systems Protection Board and the Office of Special Counsel;

• The financial management and reform of the U.S. Postal Service;

• The safety, infrastructure, finances and performance of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority;

• Intergovernmental affairs, including state and local governments; and

• The management and procurement of federal property.

The Subcommittee will conduct oversight of the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget, the General Services Administration, and other entities within its jurisdiction.

From the Republican side of the committee:

AN EFFECTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

The Republican Members will continue to encourage a federal workforce that is efficient, effective, and accountable to the American taxpayers. The Members will assess the Administration’s efforts to make federal workers more accountable for poor performance or misconduct, including sexual misconduct. The Members will assess the use of taxpayer-funded official time by federal workers, some of whom perform exclusively union business during work hours.

In addition, the Members will support the work of the Office of Special Counsel and will examine findings of systemic Hatch Act violations in the United States Postal Service. The Members will support the work of the IG community, and strive that IGs have the resources they need to carry out their duties responsibly.