



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



NFFE News Release

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Warning: Two Year Probation Bill Could Destroy Executive Branch Accountability

Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4182, the “Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service Act of 2017,” which, if passed into law, allows extended probationary periods of two years or more for new federal employees. The bill also creates a new two-year probation period for current employees who are promoted to supervisory or senior executive positions. While under probationary employment, an employee can be terminated without cause or justification.

“This poorly-written bill is a travesty for many reasons,” stated Randy Erwin, national president of the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE). “Most notably, it would crush transparency and accountability among the management and executive ranks, and it would effectively stop whistleblowers dead in their tracks.”

Vague language in the bill allows individual supervisors to decide when a probationary period begins and ends, which would open the door to unending legal challenges for removal cases. In addition, the supervisor-probation provision creates a perpetual probationary period for federal employees who seek advancement, arguably discouraging innovators and others who seek to make positive change from applying for supervisory positions.

“No competent manager needs *two years* to figure out if someone is a good fit for a job,” Erwin continued. “At its best, this bill silences innovators and whistleblowers through the fear of losing their jobs. At its worst, this bill encourages crooked managers to promote potential whistleblowers and reformers only to fire them after they take the job. Discrimination, retaliation, unethical behavior, and political corruption all get a big boost under this bill.”

“All one has to do is look at the original cosponsors of the bill to know that this is yet another initiative to kill executive branch anti-corruption laws for the prospect of cultivating political exploitation,” said Erwin. “This bill is not in the best interests of the American people. Let’s hope the Senate is a little smarter.”

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Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is the oldest union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents 110,000 federal employees in 35 departments and agencies government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO. For more information, go to www.nffe.org.