

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2017

Mr. Scott Lutterloh
Acting Assistant Secretary of the Navy
Manpower and Reserve Affairs
Department of the Navy
614 Sicard Street SE
Washington, D.C. 20374

Mr. Tony Torres Ramos
Director
Office of Civilian Human Resources
Department of the Navy
614 Sicard Street SE
Washington, D.C. 20374

Dear Messrs. Lutterloh and Ramos:

We are writing to echo the concerns that our Senate colleagues expressed in their March 21, 2017 letter detailing the impact that the Department of the Navy's suspension of the Accelerated Promotion Program has had on employees hired between January 23, 2016 and December 22, 2016. We urge the Navy to retroactively apply promotions to the employees who would have otherwise been eligible.

Since 1979, the Accelerated Promotion Program has effectively attracted and retained critical and competitive workers for our naval public shipyards. This program allows for the Navy to compete with the private sector in recruiting highly-skilled workers, many of whom work in the science and engineering fields. Additionally, through this program, the recruited are able to develop the skills and expertise necessary to sustain our naval fleet and meet our nation's constantly evolving seapower needs. This program is crucial in ensuring that our Navy has the necessary workforce to carry out its mission.

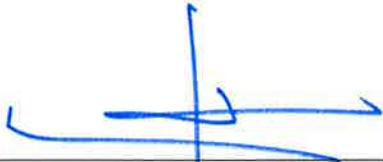
It is our understanding that the Navy's Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) directed the four public shipyards to cease accelerated promotions, due to the lack of authority to approve these promotions, beginning January 23, 2016. On December 22, 2016, the Office of Personnel Management clarified that OCHR has such authority. Despite this clarification and OCHR's subsequent reversal of its position, OCHR decided not to retroactively apply promotions to employees who should have been eligible, taking professional opportunities and pay away from 189 individuals across the four public shipyards – 81 at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard; 45 at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard; 5 at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard; and 58 at Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

The situation that these 189 employees have been put in is simply unfair. These employees will see their coworkers who were hired before and after them benefit from the program, which will likely result in increasing disparity in pay for equal work as time passes. As our Senate colleagues shared, this inequity and the inevitable negative impact on the retention of these employees is deeply concerning.

The citizens of this country depend on the Navy to maintain, train, and equip our naval forces around the globe. The success of the Navy executing its mission is dependent on its workforce. The Navy must use its authority to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and that all tools are used to best recruit and retain a competitive workforce. As such, we urge the Navy to retroactively apply promotions to employees who should have been eligible for the Accelerated Promotion Program at the time of their hiring.

We appreciate your consideration and attention on this important issue.

Sincerely,



COLLEEN HANABUSA
Member of Congress



CAROL SHEA-PORTER
Member of Congress



DEREK KILMER
Member of Congress



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Member of Congress



CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress