

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2017

The Honorable Sean Stackley
Acting Secretary of the Navy
The Pentagon, Room 4E686
Washington, D.C. 20350-1000

Dear Secretary Stackley,

Thank you for your continued service to the Navy and our nation. Your dedication to the Navy, the men and women who serve in it, and those who support their readiness is greatly appreciated. Given that interest, we wish to extend our support for the Department of Defense's recent exclusion of shipyards and depot employees from the hiring freeze. However, as that exception is being implemented, we are concerned with the Navy's guidance and the impact of that guidance on reasonably filling those exempt positions.

On January 23, 2017, President Trump issued a Presidential Memorandum that froze the hiring and promotion of civilian employees. Many of us were concerned that this policy would erode the readiness of the Navy and cost taxpayers. With that in mind, we were relieved that the February 1, 2017, implementation guidance issued by the Department of Defense had provided an exception for "Positions in shipyards and depots in which positions incumbents perform direct management of inventory and direct maintenance of equipment."

On February 1, 2017, the Navy published a five step and four-tiered process for requesting exemptions from the hiring freeze. Instead of establishing an efficient process for exempting positions, it established one that will delay hiring actions several weeks if not longer. During that time, shipyards and depots will most likely lose quality candidates, realize delays in maintenance, and possibly fail to meet the requirements of the fleet. Failure to address this will not just be felt in the present, but long into the future.

In our opinion, it would be easier, less expensive, and further in-line with the intent of the Department of Defense's exemption authority to establish an automatic exemption process that clears a class of positions based on occupation code and command. Furthermore, pushing the decision down one or more levels would be more responsive to the needs of Combatant Commanders while providing the due diligence required to ensure that all hiring and promotion actions are executed appropriately.

Given these concerns, we urge you to retract the policy and issue guidance that offers immediate exemption authority for those federal civilians working at the public shipyards and depots that keep our ships and submarines ready.

As advocates of the Navy we stand ready to work with you and support your efforts to meet this interest. Thank you for your service and for stepping up in your current capacity.

Sincerely,

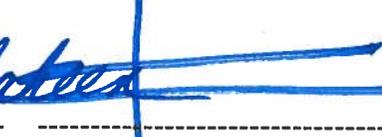

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