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October 9, 2015

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elijah Cummings  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
2471 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Cummings, and Members of the Committee,

As you know, the Senior Executives Association (SEA) is a professional association that for 35 years has represented the interests of career federal executives in government, including those in Senior Executive Service (SES) and equivalent positions, such as Senior Level (SL) and Scientific and Professional (ST) positions. SEA has long promoted policies to ensure an effective government. On behalf of SEA, I am pleased to offer the Association's perspective on three pieces of legislation being considered by the committee, including S. 1172, the Edward "Ted" Kaufman and Michael Leavitt Presidential Transitions Improvements Act of 2015; S. 1580, the Competitive Service Act of 2015; and S. 1576, the Representative Payee Fraud Prevention Act of 2015.

S. 1172 - Edward "Ted" Kaufman and Michael Leavitt Presidential Transitions Improvements Act of 2015

In today's dynamic, multi-faceted global environment, ensuring that a new Presidential Administration is as prepared as possible to take the reins of the United States government on day one in office is of critical importance. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Carper's legislation enhances existing law to strengthen the transition process. This legislation acknowledges the benefits of transition planning and infrastructure, and rightfully mandates that career federal employees and Executive Branch agencies each have a role to play in a successful transition.

A critical feature of the legislation is that it recognizes the importance of career Senior Executives in maintaining agency operations and leadership continuity between two Administrations. The legislation mandates that senior career employees lead transition efforts at their agencies, working in conjunction with the Presidentially-selected transition coordinating council. Additionally, the bill requires agencies to designate a qualified career employee to serve in an acting leadership capacity during the transition for each critical non-career position in the agency. It also mandates a senior career leader to be the Federal Transition Coordinator responsible for chairing the Agency Transition Directors Council. Previously, transition working groups led by career leaders were authorized, but not mandated, and we support this change in existing law.

Having career leaders hold the reins of agencies during a period when many political appointees leave the Administration not only provides for continuity of operations, but puts those career leaders in a position to work with career and political transition staff to ensure new appointees coming into agencies are interfacing with leaders with boots-on-the-ground experience in their new organizations, and can help the appointees successfully navigate not only their new roles and responsibilities, but an agency's

unique workforce and workplace culture. SEA supports provisions of the legislation ensuring that appointees to key positions in agencies receive training in addition to training already offered under the Presidential Transition Act to heads of departments and senior officials in the Executive Office of the President, so that the appointees are better equipped to carry out their duties in the unique environment of the federal government.

#### S. 1580 - Competitive Service Act of 2015

SEA commends Senators Tester, Portman, Cardin, Moran, Heitkamp, Enzi, and Johnson for their bipartisan support of this hiring reform legislation. This common-sense proposal will allow the government to save time and resources by sharing lists of employees deemed to be qualified and eligible for a federal job at a specific agency with other agencies who are hiring for similar positions. Providing agencies with access to lists of qualified candidates who have undergone a competitive assessment reduces duplication and brings efficiency to the government's hiring process.

#### S. 1576 - Representative Payee Fraud Prevention Act of 2015

SEA applauds Senators Lankford and Heitkamp for introducing, and Chairman Johnson for cosponsoring and supporting, this important legislation that empowers U.S. Attorneys to prosecute retiree representatives who misuse funds from the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) and Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS). By classifying the crime of misusing federal retirement funds as a felony, with the same protections provided for Social Security and Veterans payees, the legislation can effectively deter deceitful caretaker behavior and ensure that retirees who have devoted their careers to public service maintain retirement security and protections against abuse.

**SEA urges the committee to support these bipartisan bills**, and looks forward to continuing to work with members to craft policy that can improve government and government operations. Please contact SEA Legislative Director Jason Briefel ([jbriefel@shawbransford.com](mailto:jbriefel@shawbransford.com)) if you would like to further discuss SEA's perspective.

Sincerely,



CAROL A. BONOSARO  
President