



Legislative Agenda
114th Congress

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The career executive corps provides leadership and skills to accomplish the work of the federal government effectively and efficiently. SEA acts as the voice and advocate for the integrity of the corps. To this end, SEA actively supports a federal career executive corps that is highly qualified, accountable and focused on ensuring agencies meet their missions. To do so, SEA advocates for tools and policies to strengthen the federal workforce as a whole, reform the SES performance management system, ensure appropriate accountability and incentivize strong organizational performance.

Since its founding, SEA has had as its mission to:

- Improve the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of the federal government.
- Advance the professionalism of career executives.
- Advocate the interests of career federal executives, especially members of SEA.
- Enhance public recognition of the contributions of federal career executives.

In the 114th Congress SEA will pursue the following legislative goals:

ADVOCATING FOR STRONGER, ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

The federal government, and the civilian workers who support it, provide valuable services that the American people rely upon. To ensure that agencies are able to meet their missions and deliver on strong customer service goals, SEA calls the following:

- Appropriations legislation that is completed in a timely manner to ensure agencies can budget to achieve the best use of taxpayer funds.
- Multi-year budgets that allow agencies to make long-term, strategic budget and contracting decisions to ensure the most effective use of funds.

ENSURING EMPLOYEE ACCOUNTABILITY

Employees are best held accountable, for both positive and negative actions, through ensuring that employees understand the systems that govern the workforce and by ensuring necessary tools are made available to train, develop, and oversee performance. Moreover, numerous barriers often prevent supervisors from dealing effectively with poor performing and problem employees. The following proposals are designed to reduce or remove these barriers, providing supervisors the tools necessary to ensure accountability:

- Creation of a program to provide “onboarding” for all new political appointees to include information on ethics, agency functions, SES and other workforce performance management systems, etc.;
- Hold political appointees accountable for the timely administration of SES performance management, including ratings and performance plans;
- End the abuse of administrative leave during personnel actions by requiring employees to remain in a duty status during an investigation or personnel action unless the employee is a threat to the agency;

- Require training for all executives, managers and supervisors in rehabilitating or removing problem employees;
- Creation of a Federal Employee Court of Appeals to eliminate the multiplicity of appeal routes currently available to employees;
- Expansion of the probationary period to two years for those jobs that require extensive training periods;
- Ensure managers are supported to take actions to deal with poor performers through the Federal Managers Fairness Act;

PROMOTING COMPREHENSIVE TALENT MANAGEMENT

The workforce is the most important asset and agency has and drives organizational performance. To ensure a high-performing, qualified workforce, agencies and Congress must make investments in training, development, and assessments. Processes must also be put in place to ensure consistent management of the civilian federal workforce at each agency. Such tools include:

- Require OPM to create and maintain a government-wide list of SES. This should be done through the creation of an interactive program that is not only a database, but allows senior level employees to post career information, search for developmental opportunities, networking and mentoring, etc.
- Codify the SES Resource Office at OPM to ensure consistent, government-wide oversight of the SES corps;
- Require agency Executive Resource Boards (ERBs) to exercise management over agency-wide SES corps.
- Ensure agencies resource training and development for employees at all levels to build the talent pipeline for aspiring Senior Executives.

RESTORING CAREER LEADERSHIP

SEA proposes the following statutory changes to ensure that there are opportunities for career executives to advance, that they hold positions vital to maintaining continuity, and that excessive layers of political appointees do not inhibit the communication between career and political leadership necessary to achieve high performance. Proposals include:

- Reduce the limit of non-career SES at any agency from 25% to 15%;
- Ensure the rules on the maximum number of non-career SES at any agency are applied to filled SES positions, not authorized positions;
- Require all cabinet level agencies to have a career executive as the Assistant Secretary for Administration, Management, or comparable position;
- Designate “Chief” positions (e.g. Chief Human Capital Officer) to be filled by career appointees;
- Require that all politically appointed Assistant Secretaries have a Deputy who is a career SES appointee.

REFORMING SES PAY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The SES performance management system is the basis for determining pay levels, performance awards and annual ratings for each Senior Executive. The current system requires reform to ensure that it is applied consistently, fairly, and transparently. Reforms to the system would restore the confidence of employees and Congress that the system is holding Senior Executives accountable for individual and organizational performance. SES proposes several solutions:

- End the balkanization of senior level pay systems to ensure consistent application across government;
- Increased transparency in the ratings process, including explanation of ratings levels and requiring agencies to publicly post ratings and performance data;
- Restore locality pay and delink SES pay from the Executive Schedule to provide an annual increase based on the General Schedule increase;
- Assured increase for new entrants into the Senior Executive Service.

INCREASING DIVERSITY IN THE SES

SEA supports diversity legislation that requires OPM and agencies to implement methods of increasing diversity in the SES, including creating a diverse pipeline of candidates, while upholding merit system principles.

ADVOCATING FOR FAIR WORKFORCE POLICIES

SEA is active regarding policies affecting the federal workforce government-wide and promoting good government initiatives.

Such policies also include those affecting retired federal employees, such as repealing the WEP/GPO; enacting Premium Conversion for retirees (allowing them to use pre-tax dollars for employer-sponsored health plans); and allowing lump-sum annual leave payouts to be deposited into the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

SEA will be vigilant in opposing legislation that unfairly targets federal employees, including broad pay freezes, changing annuity calculations from a High-3 to High-5, and across the board workforce reductions.

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