

STATEMENT OF
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before the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE, POSTAL SERVICE, AND THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

on

DIVERSITY IN THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

MAY 10, 2007

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss diversity in the leadership ranks of the Federal Government, including the Senior Executive Service. The mission of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is to ensure that the Federal Government has an effective civilian workforce. President Bush and all of us at OPM wholeheartedly share your goal of building a Federal workforce that draws on the strengths of America's diversity. Under the leadership of OPM Director Linda Springer during the last two years, OPM has expanded its efforts to reach the broadest possible pool of applicants for Federal jobs.

We are committed to the merit system principles and ensuring that all Americans receive equal access to Federal employment opportunities and fair evaluation of their knowledge, skills, and abilities, not only in the Senior Executive Service (SES), but at all levels of the Federal workforce. Many of our future leaders in the SES are already serving as employees and managers in the Federal Government in lower-level non-SES positions. It is important for Federal agencies to continue their efforts to develop these future leaders through leadership training and succession planning programs. And this reality underscores the fact that Federal agencies should be looking both outward and inward as part of their SES recruitment efforts.

We believe OPM has been vigorous in its efforts to promote Federal employment widely, including in areas with diverse populations of potential applicants. Our outreach has included support for Federal career days and job fairs at universities which were targeted for their potential to help us build a highly qualified and diverse applicant pipeline. We also target community colleges, which traditionally have had stronger ties to their local

communities. Community colleges also can be a vital source of qualified candidates for building a workforce that draws on America's diversity.

As part of our effort to cast the widest possible net, OPM also launched a television ad campaign last year to spark interest in Federal employment. We aired these ads in targeted markets where we believe there is likely to be an ample supply of individuals who have the qualifications, skills, and experience the Federal Government needs in its workforce. We have seen a consistent spike in visits to our USAJOBS web site after the ads have aired. The ads have had a strong impact in raising awareness of, and generating interest in, the array of important and rewarding careers in the Federal Government. In addition to helping recruit new talent, the ads have showcased the impressive variety of public services provided by Federal employees every day. The series of ads, entitled "What Did You Do at Your Job Today?," have been aired in 17 markets, including El Paso and Waco, Texas; Las Cruces, New Mexico; Champaign, Illinois; Raleigh, North Carolina; Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi; Greenville and Spartanburg, South Carolina; Rochester, New York; Pittsburgh; Kansas City; Spokane, Washington; and other cities. The ads feature Federal employees drawn from a wide variety of professions and agencies.

These outreach initiatives are part of a larger long-term effort designed to address the increasing numbers of Federal employees becoming eligible for retirement in the next few years. Succession planning is a crucial element of OPM's efforts to develop a strong cadre of senior executives, as well as to build and maintain an effective workforce at all levels. Major departments and agencies are required, under the Human Capital Scorecard in the President's Management Agenda, to put in place an approved leadership succession plan and to meet the plan's milestones and targets. Candidate development programs are a recommended part of agency leadership succession plans. These programs must address the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) that OPM has identified as critical for assessing and developing future leaders. The ECQs include fostering an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued.

OPM has also provided agencies with a tool to assist them in developing and implementing leadership succession plans. This Strategic Leadership Succession Management Model is based in part on an understanding that effective leadership succession planning must be fully integrated into an agency's organizational culture. The OPM model shows agencies how to integrate diversity values into their strategic leadership succession planning.

In addition to the Human Capital Scorecard's requirements for succession planning, there is also a diversity component in our broader assessment of agencies' human capital management practices. The red, yellow, and green scores agencies receive are based on the Standards for Success described in OPM's Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF). Diversity is an important element in this framework. Overall, agencies have scored well on these scorecard items, by developing strategies for sustaining diversity and implementing outreach and other activities designed to broaden their applicant pools.

As you know, OPM also initiated a Federal Candidate Development Program (FedCDP) in 2005 to provide opportunities to a broad audience for development and possible placement into the SES. The initial result of the first program was the placement of eight individuals in SES positions. We plan to administer the program again and will introduce some efficiencies while still reaching out to the broadest Governmentwide audience. OPM will continue to explore with agencies the best approaches for developing future leaders and potential candidates for the SES.

Mr. Chairman, let me take a brief moment to also address the latest Government-wide data on minority representation in the Federal Government. As you know, under Section 7201 of title 5, United States Code, OPM is required to report to Congress on an annual basis with respect to minority representation in the Federal Government in relation to the overall Civilian Labor Force. Our most recent report was submitted to the Congress, and to your subcommittee, in January of this year. We believe the report shows that the Federal Government continues to be a leader in employing minorities. Specifically, the latest data shows overall increases in minority representation between 2005 and 2006, with minority groups better represented in the Federal Workforce than the Civilian Labor Force.

In conclusion, I want to assure you that OPM will continue its efforts in the areas I have described. In accomplishing OPM's mission to ensure our Government has an effective Federal civilian workforce, we need to make sure that workforce is highly qualified, citizen centered, and results driven. If we are to succeed, we must continue to focus on the need to develop and recruit a senior executive corps, and in doing so, we must look for all sources of potential talent and continue to draw on the strength of our nation's broad diversity.

I would be happy to respond to whatever questions you may have.