

**Statement of  
Clarence C. Crawford  
Chief Financial Officer  
Office of Personnel Management**

**Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
Subcommittee on Financial Management, Government Information, and  
International Security  
United States Senate**

**on**

**Federal Agencies and Conference Spending**

**September 14, 2006**

Dr. Coburn and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), I want to thank you and the members of the Subcommittee on Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security for the opportunity to testify today on the subject of “Federal Agencies and Conference Spending.” Please know that Director Springer, as a former private sector chief financial officer and the former controller at the Office of Management and Budget, is totally committed to ensuring that OPM spending of tax dollars is justified and will further both our strategic mission for the agency and our goals for the Federal workforce we serve.

OPM supports the prudent participation in conferences that enable employees to do a better job in supporting the agency’s mission “to ensure that the Federal Government has an effective civilian workforce.” These could include training conferences organized by

OPM as well as those sponsored by other federal agencies and professional associations. These could also include continuing professional education programs to maintain important and relevant staff certifications.

As a central agency, OPM staff receives numerous requests to present or attend conferences. However, Director Springer requires her senior staff to carefully scrutinize all conference participation. The conferences must make business sense for OPM programs and the agencies we support.

Previous to 2004, OPM held a number of multi-day annual conferences covering topics such as employee and labor relations, workforce issues, and Federal Government benefits administration. We ended that practice in FY 2004 and moved to one consolidated human capital conference, the “Federal Workforce Conference”, which we now host every eighteen months. We found this approach to be a far more cost effective means of disseminating valuable strategic human capital information and direction with agency partners. There are a number of up-front costs for OPM associated with running the Federal Workforce Conference which are offset by participant registration fees. In addition to the training benefits received by the participants, this approach realizes budget savings for both OPM and its agency customers by reducing planning activities and travel requirements.

In the current fiscal environment, it is incumbent on all Federal agencies to take a hard look at spending to identify areas for greater efficiencies and reduced costs, while still

producing valuable results. Conference sponsorship and attendance is no exception. During July of this year, we provided to the Committee total conference spending for FY's 2001 through 2007. For FY's 2001 to 2003, the amounts were \$81,000, \$68,000 and \$145,000, respectively, based on the best information available. The actual conference spending for FY 2004 was \$358,000 and in FY 2005 it was \$331,000. We continue to estimate that the FY 2006 amount will be approximately \$327,000 or less than four tenths of one percent of personnel compensation. While we are estimating FY 2007 expenditures at \$290,000, conference activities will be evaluated after passage of OPM's appropriations bill and preparation of operating plans.

Dr. Coburn, OPM is very committed to maintaining proper stewardship of Federal funds. As the Chief Financial Officer, I can assure you that we will continue to avoid unnecessary conference expenditures, and where appropriate, to vigorously pursue more cost-effective methods of participating.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before the Subcommittee, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have.