

STATEMENT OF
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BEFORE THE
SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE
ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,
THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE AND
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
ON
PREPARING FOR TRANSITION:
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY PERSONNEL SYSTEM

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Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to brief the subcommittee. I am Jeffrey Wataoka, Director, Human Resources Service Center Pacific. The HRSC Pacific was established September 30, 1996 and has a workforce of approximately 62. We are one of seven HRSCs within the Department of Navy. Our Headquarters is the Office of Civilian Human Resources, located in Washington, DC. Our Headquarters and all of the United States HRSCs are converting to NSPS as part of Spiral 1.1. In my current position, I am responsible for providing human resources services to approximately 150 activities in Hawaii, Guam and Japan. The serviced activities in Hawaii include the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard/Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, U.S. Pacific Command, Commander, U. S. Pacific Fleet Headquarters and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies. I appreciate the opportunity to address how I helped prepare our employees for implementation of NSPS.

This September, I will have served in the Department of the Navy for 40 years. During my years of service in the human resources field, I've participated in many changes including those made under the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Effecting change is oftentimes challenging especially when the goals are significant and affect a wide variety of employees. This is true of NSPS wherein one of the goals is to provide the Department of Defense with a modern and flexible human resources system that can be more responsive to the national security environment, while preserving employee protections and benefits. From the outset, the Department of Defense structured their plan to build trust and credibility with employees and this is what I focused on at the Human Resources Service Center Pacific. My efforts included creating an environment

where leadership is accountable for ensuring that performance requirements are clearly defined, resourced and measured, ensuring that all employees have the opportunity to perform to their full potential and be recognized for that performance and clearly aligning the business processes and performance of HRSC Pacific with the goals and objectives of OCHR and the Human Capital Strategies of the Department of the Navy and Department of Defense.

NSPS – What’s in it for employees? Four things come readily to mind: recognizing and rewarding employees based on their personal contribution to our mission, defining performance expectations between supervisors and employees, encouraging employees to take ownership of their performance and success and promoting broader skill development and advancement opportunities in pay bands.

To prepare employees for the transition to NSPS, I focused on three critical factors: communication, training and participation. I will now provide some details on each of these factors.

First and foremost is communication (both oral and written). Face-to-face interaction, which started over one year ago, included several “all hands” meetings conducted by supervisors and employees in our office to discuss proposed NSPS regulations and procedures. Employees also attended separate presentations and discussions with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Civilian Human Resources); the Director, Department of the Navy, Office of Civilian Human Resources; Program Manager,

Department of the Navy NSPS Project Management Office; and representatives from Demonstration Projects who have experience with the pay for performance system.

Written material disseminated to the staff included the NSPS regulations; HR Primer on NSPS that highlighted key points on issues such as classification, staffing, performance management, compensation and workforce shaping; and newspaper articles that included information on pay issues, legal issues and comments from employees regarding NSPS.

Newsletters from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Civilian Human Resources), Office of Civilian Human Resources, as well as those I issued at the local level were disseminated to employees. So far, there have been 18 newsletters from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy; the most recent one is dated March 7, 2006.

This newsletter covered such topics as facts about conversion, preparing for NSPS and an update of training. Information on NSPS is also communicated to employees via various websites including those from the Department of Defense and Department of the Navy.

The Department of Defense website includes the regulations and frequently asked questions (and answers). NSPS material was posted on our bulletin boards. I disseminated NSPS brochures to all employees including those entitled, "Communicating with Your Supervisor," "Focus on Performance" and "Role of the HR Practitioner."

Videos such as, "NSPS: Towards a Mission-Centered Workforce" and "Appraising Performance" were shown to employees. Finally, key members of my staff participate on bi-weekly web-exchanges in which the latest status of NSPS is discussed and questions answered. We also recently participated in a one-day session during which a detailed overview of NSPS conversion was presented and NSPS conversion issues were discussed and questions responded to.

The second factor is training. Training under NSPS is comprised of soft skill and technical training and, because we're a human resources office, additional informal and formal training has been or will be conducted for employees. Soft skill on-line training in the Department of the Navy included "Coaching for High Performance," "Listening Skills," "Goal Setting" and "Effective Communication." The technical training completed or scheduled to be completed for all employees by the end of this month is "HR Elements for Practitioners" (24 hours) and "Performance Management" (8 hours). "HR Elements for Practitioners" and "Performance Management" is mandatory for all employees, including supervisors. Training that will be scheduled in the near future will include discussions regarding pay pool management and pay for performance. Specific consultation on pay pool operations is being held 18 April 2006. The training needed to support the competencies required of HR professionals in the future will not end with the deployment of NSPS. A proposed Implementation Strategy has been developed for our staff to acquire different and expanding skill sets, with less focus on administrative and process functions and more on consultation and strategic activities. These new skills will emphasize training as well as certification programs, work experience, mentoring by other HR professional and other avenues. Employees will participate regarding the content and success of their development plan through surveys and face-to-face interaction with their supervisors

Participation is the third factor. The prior to transition to NSPS in our office was facilitated by training of our staff and management of our major functions. Specifically,

all employees previously attended training on customer service, empowerment, and change management. We established an internal self-assessment program that emphasizes the use of metrics to identify strengths and weaknesses in our major functions, including recruitment, processing, training and labor relations. The contributions of all employees are linked to the Strategic Plan of our organization. Further, about two years ago, we embarked on an initiative called the Human Resources Academy, which emphasized the identification of key products and services and the corresponding standards and measures by employees. Recognition was provided to employees who exceeded their job expectations. More recently, employees have been involved in specific NSPS initiatives. Our Headquarters established teams with representatives from all of the Spiral 1.1 HRSCs to provide input on how NSPS will be implemented throughout our Command. These teams provided input on proposed regulations, conducting joint training, and participating in focus groups for development of job objectives and implementation teams involving information technology, conversion, classification and recruitment. During this process we had three key precepts: (1) Did the employee understand the message, (2) implement NSPS one way one time across our headquarters and the HRSCs to leverage resources and (3) emphasis to all managers, supervisors and employees that we are all in this together. Employees also identified and documented their employee development needs and participated in developing their own performance plan.

We have been actively engaged in ensuring all employees understand NSPS and the effect of this new system on their role in furthering our important mission. Personally, I

am excited to begin deployment of NSPS and am continually committed to open communication, training and involving the workforce in NSPS. I believe our employees are well prepared for NSPS implementation and will soon embrace it as a means to improved performance. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.