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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

October 17, 2003

BY FACSIMILE

ORIGINAL BY U.S. MAIL

The Honorable Kay Cole James
Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Director James:

I am writing to urge you to extend the comment period for the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) proposed regulation (5 CFR Part 300, RIN 3206-AK05) regarding guidelines for executive branch employees on detail with the legislative branch of the Federal government.

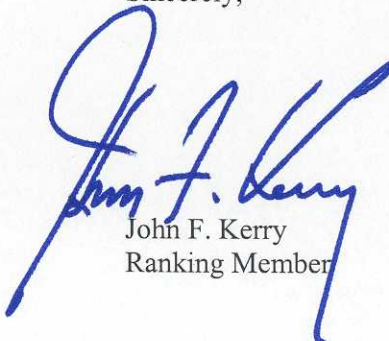
It is my belief that the proposed rule will hinder coordination between the respective branches of government and likely adversely affect the legislative work of many of the approximately 700 congressional offices, committees and subcommittees.

As you know, detailees from all Federal agencies are critical to assisting Congress in working more closely with the executive branch to address the needs of everyday Americans. Executive branch detailees bring a unique perspective to a congressional office and provide invaluable input to the legislative and oversight work of Congress. They provide the legislative branch greater understanding of the practical effects of planned legislation. In turn, detailees offer the executive branch the most direct representation on the ground level within Congress. Their department or agency also benefits from the detail upon their return, both in terms of increased mutual understanding and respect between the two branches and in the detailee's increased substantive knowledge of the legislative process.

Due to the possible long-term effects of the proposed rule and the significant role that detailees play in Congress, the 45-day comment period set forth in the proposed regulation -- published in the *Federal Register* on Tuesday, September 9, 2003 -- is inadequate to allow the public to address these and similar issues in a thoughtful and comprehensive manner.

Therefore, I request that you extend the comment period for this proposed regulation by 45 days until Monday, December 8, 2003. Please feel free to contact me, or have your staff contact Marc Comer of my Committee staff at (202) 224-8496, should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,



John F. Kerry
Ranking Member