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To: David C. Childs A-76comments/OMB/EOP@EOP  
cc:  
Subject: IMPORTANT

My name is Joanna L. Harlow, I have been a proud and devoted federal employee since June 1, 1987. I have followed in the footsteps of my late Grandfather, Malcolm S. Harlow Sr. who also devoted his life to public service with DoD.

The driving force in my career has never been to make a lot of money, get rich and retire early, or have a glamorous title and make a name for myself, or even to receive public or private recognition for the work I do. If it was, I would not have chosen federal service to provide my special talents to. All I strive for is to make a humble living and be proud to make sure the taxes we all pay are spent wisely. I provide excellent value for the money I receive in my paycheck and hope some of the people who pay taxes don't feel cheated, at least not by me.

I feel slighted by the "Holiday Message from the President" sent on

December 16, 2002, which was addressed to the military forces, but was distributed to the Federal workforce. It never even mentioned Federal employees who devote our lives to "serving our country with skill, honor and dedication" who don't wear a uniform? This message felt like I got a holiday greeting meant for someone else, and as far as I was concerned, I wanted to return it to sender, "recipient unknown". Then I thought, the A-76 program shows how much we are truly valued by our leaders, targeting the IT workforce first and foremost. Being in IT, we are considered overhead, as if it is unimportant or a luxury or anyone can do this job. What we do to keep the contracting workforce productive IS important, and extremely complicated. The demands placed upon us by managers, agency headquarters, and the workforce in general is very stressful to many of us. I and the people I work with in IT endure the stressful demands placed upon us to do the almost impossible because we are dedicated to our jobs and our mission to keep everything up and running. I don't think a private company will be as dedicated to this work. They will not be able to be as flexible as changes and demands are applied, unless of course the Government is willing to keep adding more and more money to the contract for changes in scope.

The end result will be either, the contract for IT services will end up costing tax payers much more than was originally bid, or the workforce will be forced to do without changes that could help productivity because the government won't pay for additional costs above the original contract. I also don't believe that private contractors will be as dedicated to the job and getting it done for the best interest of the government. I believe private companies are more dedicated to the money the contract brings in, as opposed to the pride of knowing the agency is running efficiently. We don't work here for the money, private companies do. We roll with the changes and demands, without asking for compensation, private companies do.

We are proud to serve our country all our lives, but I feel private companies think the Government is a cash cow, and they are trying to get the most money they can, they are proud of the bottom line. I don't want to work for a private company, I want to serve my country and be a part of what makes government better and more efficient. A-76 is not the way to go if you ask me, I can see the mess it will cause in the long run.

I never thought belonging to a union was necessary working for the Government, because I always held the belief, the government made the laws to protect workers, and I always had faith that I would be treated fairly if I gave my all to my job and country, but now A-76 has changed my belief and faith.