



***Statement for the Record***

**American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO**

**Provided to the**

**House Committee on Oversight and Accountability**

**Hearing on**

**“Rightsizing Government.”**

**February 5, 2025**

Chair Comer, Ranking Member Connolly, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), which represents more than 800,000 federal and District of Columbia employees who serve the American people in 70 different agencies across the country and around the world, I thank you for inviting AFGE to share its views on the important topic before the Committee this morning, “Rightsizing Government.”

In just the last two weeks the Trump Administration has initiated the biggest assault on the federal workforce in American history, typified by the Executive Order signed on January 20<sup>th</sup> that would convert onto Schedule F some tens of thousands of nonpartisan civil servants who were originally hired on their knowledge, skills, and abilities. These civil servants would then lose all tenure protection and stand to be fired.

In just the past week, we have seen the Administration issue a legally dubious policy to drain departments and agencies of experienced and dedicated professionals, clearly with the objective of crippling the ability of federal agencies to do their jobs and setting them up to fail in the eyes of the American taxpayer. What is happening today is not a drive to streamline government but to destroy it.

AFGE cannot overstate our commitment to the apolitical, professional federal civil service. The Trump Administration’s proposals to erode federal civil service will hinder agencies’ ability to deliver critical services to the American public. Make no mistake about it: if the assault that the Trump Administration initiated last month continues unchallenged, every member of Congress will soon hear from angry or confused constituents about why their VA claims have not been processed or why their Social Security retirement benefits have not been delivered.

Congress created the civil service system in 1883 to end the spoils system that characterized federal hiring throughout the 19th century, to guard against arbitrary hiring and firing decisions that are based not on job performance, but on political affiliation, personal loyalty tests, and outright discrimination. In the 140 years since its creation, the civil service system has served the American people with professionalism and efficiency and has ensured that acts of Congress are implemented dispassionately and faithfully.

Rather than regressing, AFGE urges the administration to focus on improving government programs for the public. For over 140 years, the merit-based civil service has been a cornerstone of American democracy. Efforts to politicize federal employment threaten this foundation. Congress must act to uphold civil service protections, ensuring government remains effective, impartial, and accountable to the American people.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record.