



Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Strengthens Probationary Periods to Improve the Federal Service

ENHANCING FEDERAL WORKFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY: Today, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order strengthening probationary periods in the federal service.

- The Order establishes a new Civil Service Rule XI to govern probationary and trial periods for federal employees, superseding existing civil service regulations that limited agency discretion in evaluating such employees.
- Instead of these employees becoming tenured civil servants by default, Rule XI requires agencies to affirmatively certify that finalizing their appointment after their probationary or trial period concludes advances the public interest.
 - This fulfills a longstanding Merit Systems Protection Board recommendation.
- The Order mandates that agencies utilize probationary and trial periods (typically one year) to assess employees' fitness and alignment with agency needs and the public interest.
- It creates an individualized review process, requiring a designee of agency leadership to meet with probationary employees at least 60 days before their probationary period ends to discuss their performance and continued employment.
- The Order allows the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director to establish an appeals process for probationary terminations in some circumstances.
- The Order requires agencies to identify current probationary employees and designate evaluators within 15 days, ensuring accountability from the outset.

ENSURING A HIGH-QUALITY FEDERAL WORKFORCE: President Trump believes a meaningful probationary process is essential to maintaining a merit-based federal workforce that serves the American people.

- Probationary periods are a critical part of the hiring process to confirm an employee's ability to perform their duties, yet agencies have underutilized this tool, resulting in the indefinite retention of underperforming staff.
- The Government Accountability Office has documented that agencies often fail to screen out unsuitable employees during their probationary period, contrary to congressional intent in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.



- Existing OPM regulations have hindered agencies by imposing unnecessary obstacles to terminating probationary employees and failing to require certification that continued employment benefits the public interest.
- A high-quality, efficient federal workforce, dedicated to the public interest and no larger than necessary, is vital to serving taxpayers.
- Strengthening probationary periods ensures federal employees are held to high standards.

DRAINING THE SWAMP: The federal workforce must work for the American people, and thanks to President Trump, the federal bureaucracy is being held accountable.

- Taxpayers will no longer be burdened by an oversized, unaccountable federal bureaucracy that fails to prioritize the public interest.
- Last month, President Trump signed a Presidential Memorandum clarifying federal authority to take “suitability” actions against federal employees, ensuring accountability for bad conduct and preventing security risks both before and after appointment to federal service.
- President Trump also signed the DOGE Workforce Optimization Executive Order to make the federal workforce more efficient and effective, significantly reducing the size of government.
- This Executive Order builds on the President’s longstanding power to create Civil Service Rules to govern probationary periods in the federal government.