

****RAFM SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING – MAY 20, 2015****

OPENING STATEMENT

- **Thank you Chairman Lankford.**
- **Today marks our Subcommittee’s first hearing examining federal workforce issues.** This is a topic that I am very passionate about, and I thank our witnesses for taking the time to testify on this very important subject.
- **Since taking office in January 2013, I have worked to address the challenges faced by federal workers across North Dakota—particularly in the western North Dakota Bakken region, where the cost of living has skyrocketed thanks to the energy boom.** This led to an inability of federal agencies to compete successfully with private industry for talent as workers fled the public sector or were unable to afford housing.
- **Since bringing the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to North Dakota last year, I am pleased to say we have secured pay rate increases for nearly 500 federal employees across North Dakota, ensuring they are treated fairly.**
- **But there are also pressing concerns that the federal workforce faces on a national level, and I am looking forward to exploring those areas as well.**
- **I am particularly concerned with the group of federal employees known as “millennials,” or those who were born after the year 1980.**
- **I was shocked to learn that the median tenure of a millennial in the federal workforce is only 3.8 years.** And, that they only make up 16 percent of the federal workforce as a whole.
- **When you couple statistics like those with the fact that nearly 30 percent of the entire federal workforce will be retirement eligible by 2019, you clearly see our nation faces a serious challenge.**
- **I want to focus today on not only what we can do to better recruit these young folks into the federal workforce, but also what we can do to retain them.** It is no secret that sequestration, pay freezes, furloughs, as well as the government shutdown of 2013, didn’t exactly add to the federal workforce’s appeal.
- **But there are other reasons why young people are leaving.**
- **According to OPM’s 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoints Survey, only 1 in 3 millennials believe that creativity and innovation were rewarded within their organization and only 34 percent of them were satisfied with their opportunities for career advancement.**

- **My goal this morning is to find out from you what the federal workforce can do better.**
 - **What can we be doing to improve the speed of the hiring process?**
 - **How can we address the inability of the federal workforce to compete with private sector pay?**
 - **How can we bridge the gap between the Human Resources departments of agencies and their line managers?**
 - **How can we improve supervisor training, and ultimately, employee morale?**
- **Those are just a few of the areas I would like to explore in this morning's hearing.**
- I look forward to hearing the witnesses' testimony.
- **Thank you.**