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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

CHRISTOPHER R. HIXON, STAFF DIRECTOR
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November 1, 2017

The Honorable David Pekoske
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 20598

Dear Mr. Pekoske,

We write regarding the results of the 2017 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) related to whistleblowing and improper personnel actions at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

The 2017 FEVS results concluded that only 49% of TSA employees and only 36% of Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) employees agreed that they could “disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal.” TSA employees also showed low confidence in the enforcement of merit system principles when asked if they agreed with the statement, “Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated.” While only 35% of TSA employees agreed with this statement, an even smaller portion, 28%, of FAMS employees agreed. Only 47% of FAMS employees agreed that “prohibited personnel practices are not tolerated.”¹

It is imperative that all federal employees know that they can disclose waste, fraud, or abuse, violations of laws, regulations, and rules, and dangers to the public without fear of retaliation. In order to better understand how TSA and FAMS will address the results of the FEVS data, we request that you provide a briefing to our staff with answers to the following questions:

1. Has TSA conducted any review or assessment to determine why its employees do not feel empowered to report concerns to management?
2. Has TSA conducted any review or assessment to determine why employees believe that arbitrary actions, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are acceptable?
3. Please describe current whistleblower reprisal programs in place at TSA and FAMS and any changes you plan to make going forward based on the survey results.

¹ United States Office of Personnel Management 2017 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, *TSA Overall Results* (Oct. 2017).

4. What steps are TSA and FAMS taking to hold managers accountable, including through training, to ensure that retaliation is not tolerated?
5. What steps is TSA taking to allow OSC access to the entirety of material deemed necessary by OSC to examine allegations of whistleblower retaliation?
6. In what ways does TSA cooperate with the DHS Office of Inspector General regarding allegations of whistleblower retaliation?

Please provide your response as soon as possible, but no later than November 27, 2017. If you have any questions related to this request, please contact Courtney Allen of Chairman Johnson's staff at Courtney_Allen@hsgac.senate.gov or (202)224-4751 and Saundra Shropshire with Ranking Member McCaskill's staff at Saundra_Shropshire@hsgac.senate.gov or (202)224-2627.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Chairman



Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member