

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Heidi Heitkamp

Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management

Empowering Managers: Ideas for a More Effective Federal Workforce

Thursday, February 9, 2017

As Prepared

Thank you Chairman Lankford.

While we will inevitably discuss challenges in the hiring process today, I think it is important to highlight the irony of that discussion in light of the current hiring freeze across the federal government.

When the public sector cannot do its job in North Dakota, it has a direct impact on the lives of those in the private sector.

From making sure the food we eat is safe, to answering taxpayers' questions, to ensuring our veterans are cared for, to protecting our nation from harm—federal employees work to make North Dakota and our country a better place to live every single day.

When we fail to fill needed vacancies unnecessarily, the only people we are hurting are ourselves.

Across the board cuts and a shrinking of the overall federal workforce are not the answer to making the federal government more efficient or effective.

These cuts will also come at the expense of talent, morale, and mission in our workforce—none of which we can afford to lose.

Managers play a vital role in the culture of an agency, and are responsible for giving employees the tools they need to succeed and thrive in the workplace.

While today's hearing is, of course, not focused on the hiring freeze, it is important to keep in mind how such a freeze directly impacts the ability of both managers and employees to do their jobs effectively.

I am looking forward to examining how we can help managers use the tools that are available to them more efficiently, as well as on how we can improve supervisor training.

I will be doing all that I can to protect federal workers, and I think it is important that we are in continued communication with the Administration regarding how they plan to implement initiatives moving forward.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses, and greatly appreciate you all taking the time to be here today.

Thank you.

###