



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF  
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AFL-CIO & CLC

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June 14, 2007

The Honorable George V. Voinovich  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on the Oversight of Government Management,  
the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia,  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate

Dear Senator Voinovich,

The GAO employees seeking to form a union wanted me to thank you for your participation at the May 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing on GAO's personnel reform efforts. Active oversight by the Congress is important to ensure that agencies are held accountable for the fair treatment of their employees. The GAO employees also wanted me to clarify a few matters and ask that you continue monitoring the impact GAO's personnel changes are having.

First, contrary to what some might want you to believe, GAO employees' desire to form a union is neither a reaction against change in general, nor is it a reaction against pay-for-performance and changing how salaries are determined. Rather, there are matters of fact, fairness, transparency and equality, as well as aspects of how GAO currently operates, that the employees feel management should have addressed prior to or concurrent with any pay reform. As you know, GAO has had a pay-for-performance system for 18 years. Consequently, GAO's employees understand the strengths and limitations of such a compensation system better than most in the federal government.

Second, the employees are deeply concerned that management's approach to personnel reform will not lead to the positive, lasting transformation of GAO's culture that is needed to enable it to effectively serve the needs of Congress and the American people. These unresolved issues have

adversely affected employee morale, undermined the teamwork and trust that is critical to the success of each GAO engagement, and, ultimately, convinced GAO's employees of the urgent need to act to protect their careers and the institution they value.

Third, employees at GAO are leaving at an alarming rate. Unfortunately, the changes to GAO's pay structure encourages the very thing Congress should not want to have happen – talented, competent and dedicated employees leaving GAO or government service altogether. It takes many years of experience for GAO's employees to develop the knowledge and professional judgment necessary to perform their work. If GAO's employees are the real assets Comptroller General Walker says they are, then what is the efficacy of a system that results in the premature loss of these assets? A revolving door at GAO – one where a significant number of people come only to leave after a few years – cannot be expected to sustain the quality and breadth of work that GAO has been known for.

On behalf of those GAO employees seeking to form a union, thank you again for your commitment to reforming personnel and pay practices across the federal government and for your continued vigilance in monitoring GAO's implementation of personnel reforms. I and the employees of GAO look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Gregory J. Junemann, President  
International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers

cc: The Honorable Danny K. Davis, Chairman  
Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service and  
District of Columbia  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
United States House of Representatives