



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ENGINEERS AFL-CIO & CLC

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Dear Representative,

As behalf of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), representing upwards of 90,000 workers, including tens of thousands of federal employees, I am writing regarding HR 4182, the so-called Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service Act of 2017. This bill has been scheduled for full house consideration this week and IFPTE urges you to oppose it.

HR 4182 aims to extend the probationary period for federal civilian workers from one year to a minimum of two years. Under this bill, the probation period would not necessarily begin at the time a federal worker arrives for their first day of work. Rather, the period would, "end on the date that is 2 years after the date on which such formal training is completed." This is also true for federal jobs that require a license, in which the probationary clock would not start ticking until the license is achieved. In other words, probations for many federal workers under this legislation will be longer than two years, and dramatically more than the current 1 year period.

IFPTE is opposed to this bill for several reasons. First, this legislation is punitive in nature and serves no logical policy objective. For example, it does nothing to address performance issues, as supporters of this bill will erroneously argue, and is silent on addressing the ongoing challenges that management faces in properly evaluating new employees, regardless of whether the probationary period is for one year, or two years. For example, this past March former Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Peter Levine, testified in the Senate regarding the DOD's use of their new two-year probationary period for federal workers. Mr. Levine testified that even though managers at the DOD were granted two years to determine if a newly hired DOD civilian employee should stay or go, that authority is rarely, if ever used.

Unfortunately, this is yet another in a long list of bills from this Congress that attempts to legislate good management, while creating more useless and unnecessary requirements that end up costing taxpayers more money. It is illogical to think that a manager who will not act on a problem employee within one year of being hired would act within two years. Mr. Levine's testimony confirms as much. Federal managers already have the authority to discipline and ultimately fire employees, BUT they actually need to use the many authorities they already have to do so.

IFPTE believes that one year is more than enough time for managers to determine whether a newly hired employee can perform their job. Instead of creating more bureaucracy, as this bill will do, Congress should simply require managers to use the flexibilities they currently have, including the one year probationary period, to retain or release federal workers who have yet to fulfill their probationary periods. Please vote against HR 4182.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact IFPTE Legislative Director, Matt Biggs, at (202) 239-4880.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Junemann
President