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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Dr. Jeff T.H. Pon
Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Dr. Pon:

I am writing in strong opposition to your letter sent on May 4, 2018 to Speaker Paul D. Ryan in which you recommended legislative proposals seeking to cut benefits for federal workers.

The Dayton region is home to over 30,000 federal employees. In fact, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, more than 27,000 federal employees work diligently every day to protect our nation from numerous threats across the world. Additionally, more than 2,200 federal employees at the Dayton VA Medical Center provide the best healthcare for our wounded veterans on a daily basis.

Despite their hard work and dedication, few groups have been asked to sacrifice more than federal employees. Since the start of the Great Recession in 2008, federal workers have foregone \$182 billion in the form of pay and benefit cuts. They have suffered a three year pay freeze, followed by two years of one percent pay increases that were well below the recommended level. In addition, employees hired since 2012 have seen significant employee contribution increases mandated for their retirement accounts. Moreover, approximately 750,000 workers lost up to eight days of pay because of the devastating impacts of sequestration in 2013.

Federal employees are the cornerstone of an effective and efficient federal government. Our country relies on these talented men and women to perform critical duties across all sectors of government, from national security and healthcare to economic expansion and infrastructure development.

Worse, these proposals would affect all current retirees and employees, rather than making changes on a prospective basis. This breaks a promise to current federal employees and retirees. We should not arbitrarily make changes to policies that families have planned their lives around, particularly when it affects current retirees with limited ability to make up for unanticipated reductions in estimated income.

In order to “recruit, retain and honor a world-class workforce to serve the American people” as OPM seeks, the federal government must maintain a competitive benefits package befitting such a workforce. With the United States’ growing economy and a tightening labor market, we cannot afford to make the federal government a less attractive place to work by diminishing the very benefits that help the government keep pace with jobs in the (often higher-paying) private sector. These are highly skilled and dedicated public servants. Shrinking pensions, gutting retirement benefits, and squeezing overall compensation packages would have the effect of pushing out these vital civil servants and impairing the recruitment of new talent. After dedicating their careers to public service, federal employees and retirees deserve much better from us.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress