

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAN G. BLAIR
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Before a hearing conducted by the

CIVIL SERVICE AND AGENCY REORGANIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On

THE DEFENSE TRANSFORMATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT

TITLE I – PERSONNEL TRANSFORMATION

Subtitle A – Transformation of Civilian Personnel

Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this landmark piece of legislation.

Given the truly remarkable achievements of DoD's men and women over the last several weeks, I feel particularly privileged to join my colleague from the Department of Defense, Under Secretary David Chu to talk about ways for the Department to reach even higher levels of performance.

We have all been awed by the work of those who serve in the uniform of our Nation; we cannot thank them enough for their sacrifices. Those sacrifices serve as an especially fitting backdrop for our topic today – the Department's more than 635,000 civilian employees, civil servants in the finest traditions of American public service, a far less visible, but no less important

component of the Department's awesome "total force." They too performed magnificently in support of our troops (indeed, many were actually deployed in the Gulf), and these dedicated, rarely acknowledged, and sometimes-maligned public servants deserve our thanks as well. They delivered.

Today, DoD seeks legislation to transform the way it manages its civilian employees as it confronts the challenges of the 21st Century. In so doing, we believe that the Department's proposal represents another effort to provide badly needed human resources flexibilities so that a critical agency with a crucial mission can deliver results and secure the Nation.

The proposal is patterned after the landmark Homeland Security Act. The bill is intended to afford the Defense Department wide latitude to design a human resources system tailored to its needs. It allows the Department and OPM to work collaboratively with the major DoD unions and rewrite many of the rules that govern DoD's civilian employees.

DoD will be able to take its already successful efforts at broadbanding and pay for performance and extend them throughout the Department. We find this truly exciting. DoD can lead the way at changing the conversation from "what THE pay increase" will be next year to "what MY pay increase" will be.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with DoD as they pursue further innovations. The opportunity to continue creating systems that adapt to changing conditions while

maintaining merit is something OPM is committed to. We take our responsibility to work with DoD and establish a new system through joint regulation very seriously.

That concludes my testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.