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May 18, 2004

### “First Year On The Job: Chief Human Capital Officers”

#### Opening Statement of Chairwoman Jo Ann Davis

Thank you for being here today. An important provision of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 created the position of Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) at major Federal agencies to improve the Federal Government’s ability to select, train and manage a high-performing workforce. In creating this new important position, Congress recognized that federal employees are the Government’s biggest asset and drive its performance.

I have called this oversight hearing to examine how the Chief Human Capital Officers Act has been implemented in the Federal Government’s major departments and agencies since enactment a year ago and to make sure that the CHCO Council consists of high quality CHCOs committed to strategically managing their workforce. Congress intends that the CHCO position will make a positive difference in the performance of the Federal Government bringing the most efficient and effective service at the best value to taxpayers.

CHCOs’ duties include working closely with the agency head to develop and implement an effective personnel policy. Workers should be treated fairly, and the mission of the agency must become the top priority of every employee. Balancing both priorities is crucial and requires an official to understand both the needs of employees and a broader view of how well an agency is serving the American public.

Because of this, it was Congress’ intent that CHCOs be placed amongst agency leadership, underscoring the importance of personnel policy. Furthermore, the Homeland Security Act created the Chief Human Capital Officer Council to elevate the importance of personnel policy government-wide.

The Federal Government is moving towards a personnel system that is increasingly “merit-based.” With a majority of Federal workers moving to new pay systems under the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, it is imperative to have top-level leadership guide this transition. During this time, it will be essential for the Chief Human Capital Officers to bridge that crucial gap between agency heads and human resources departments.

With all of this in mind, the subcommittee will today look at how the addition of the CHCO position and the CHCO Council has impacted our Federal agencies. There are certainly lessons to be learned and successes to be shared since enactment a year ago. Additionally, and maybe more importantly, our witnesses will also give us a glimpse of what we are to expect in the months and years to come.

Thank you all very much for being here today, I look forward to your testimony.