

Chairwoman Jo Ann Davis
Subcommittee on Civil Service and Agency Organization
“Achieving Diversity in the Senior Executive Service”
Opening Statement
October 15, 2003

I want to start by thanking all our witnesses for being here today. This hearing is concerned with achieving diversity among the top ranks of the federal civil service, an important topic that will only grow in significance in the coming years. And I do want to mention, and thank, Ranking Member Danny Davis for requesting this hearing and for playing such a big role in planning it.

The impetus for this hearing is a General Accounting Office report from earlier this year. The GAO predicted that over the next five years about half the members of the Senior Executive Service will leave government. But the GAO analysis suggests that the racial, ethnic and gender makeup of the SES will change very little.

A diverse SES corps can be a strength for the federal government. And, as the GAO report mentions, diversity is considered so important that it is one of the eight critical success factors by which agencies are judged in the GAO’s models of strategic human capital management. Three federal agencies are represented today, to share with us their experiences in achieving diversity in their workplaces.

I am pleased that the Office of Personnel Management will be revealing its Candidate Development Program today, one of their efforts to increase minority representation at the top levels of government. We discussed this program a bit at our succession planning hearing two weeks ago, but I am interested in hearing the full details today.

Finally, we are also going to discuss the new No Fear Act, which improves agency accountability for anti-discrimination and whistleblower protection laws. This is a very new law, but we would like to hear any initial findings and reactions. Thank you, and I am looking forward to hearing your comments.

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