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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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The Honorable Gordon England  
Secretary of the Navy  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary England:

We are very pleased that you are assuming a leadership role as the Department of Defense moves forward with the development of the National Security Personnel System. The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee worked closely with the Department to establish a new personnel system that allows the Department to manage its human capital in a way that supports its national security mission while, at the same time, treating workers fairly and protecting their rights.

Consistent with Congressional intent, the Committee expects the Department and Office of Personnel Management to be full partners in the development of all components of the National Security Personnel System. The law also requires the Department to engage federal employee representatives in a collaborative process. Moreover, in order for federal employees to perceive the system as fair, the design process must be transparent.

The involvement of the civilian workforce in the design of the new National Security Personnel System is critical to its ultimate acceptance and successful implementation. Full collaboration with the Office of Personnel Management and the federal employee unions will assist the Department in meeting this critical challenge.

As you review the Department's progress to date in developing the new system, we encourage you to look to the approach used by the Department of Homeland Security, in collaboration with the Office of Personnel Management and employee representatives in designing the personnel flexibilities provided by the Homeland Security Act. Secretary Ridge and OPM Director James employed a thoughtful and deliberative approach that can be instructive to the Defense Department as it moves forward with a flexible personnel system. While there are real differences of opinion on the proposed regulations for the Department of Homeland Security, we believe that the design process produced a better product and more employee acceptance than otherwise would have been the case.