



The Center for Accountability, Modernization, and Innovation
Washington, DC

February 28, 2022

The Honorable Kiran Ahuja
Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Director Ahuja:

The Center for Accountability, Modernization, and Innovation (CAMI) is a resource and advocate for efforts to improve performance and efficiency in the delivery of services to citizens, particularly participants in means-tested government programs. Indeed, the core of our operating thesis is captured in President Biden's "Executive Order on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government" (CX Executive Order). In addition to better helping those in need while also enhancing program performance and delivery of programs, the President's Executive Order offers a crucial roadmap to restoring confidence in the role and importance of government. It is in that spirit that we write to you today.

The White House Task Force on Worker Organizing and Empowerment has important work before it. While some of what the recent report covers is outside of the scope of CAMI's expertise and focus, it is critical that any actions taken on the basis of the report be consistent with, and not inhibit (intentionally or not) the effectiveness of the President's CX Executive Order and the overall objectives of the Biden Administration to improve the citizen experience with, and equitable access to, their government.

Specifically, the report calls for the government, through its procurement and grantmaking authorities, to support "pro worker" employers—a goal with which we strongly agree. The government absolutely should contract with and issue grants to entities that have strong and appropriate workforce practices. That approach not only inures to the benefit of the workers, but to the performance of programs executed on behalf of the people consistent with the CX Executive Order.

However, elsewhere in the report, there is a recommendation to rescind the previous Administration's policy guidance in which the Administration stated that references in law to "merit systems employees" was not restricted to public employees; that it could also apply to non-governmental entities that adhere to the merit system principles as defined in 5 USC § 2301. In keeping with the spirit of the CX Executive Order, we believe the guidance should remain.

Given the intense competition for talent across the economy (in which the government continues to struggle) and the abject need for innovation in the delivery of government services, there is a real need for the policy guidance. Properly implemented by the agencies responsible for the affected programs, the guidance would incentivize “pro worker” policies as called for in Recommendation Three of the report.

Moreover, it facilitates the government’s access to the full spectrum of talent across the economy and thus to the private sector’s technological and business process innovation and expertise.

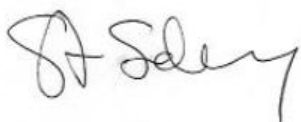
Governments at all levels are struggling to attract and retain adequate workforce resources to meet the demands of the day. While it is essential that governments have access to core skills that are needed to ensure the responsible execution of agency missions, it is also becoming increasingly evident that the government’s ability to partner with reputable and accountable external entities is equally essential. To the extent the government can incentivize the best employment practices among its external partners and providers, while also enabling the service transformation that is needed, it is a win-win for the American worker.

The purpose of the CX EO is that “government must be held accountable for designing and delivering services with a focus on the actual experience of the people whom it is meant to serve. Government must also work to deliver services more equitably and effectively.” With this in mind, we hope you will give serious consideration to the broader issues and specifically the undesirable implications associated with implementing the Task Force’s recommendation, which will harm, rather than help, the most vulnerable Americans.

We stand ready and most willing to discuss the details of this topic with you at any time.

With thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Stan Soloway

Board Chair

The Center for Accountability, Modernization, and Innovation (CAMI)

CC: Office of the Vice President
National Economic Council, Executive Office of the President
Domestic Policy Council, Executive Office of the President