

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN STEPHEN F. LYNCH

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE, POSTAL SERVICE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HEARING ON

“Temporary Employee Practices: How Long Does Temporary Last?”

Wednesday June 30th, 2010

Ladies and gentleman, it is the duty of this Subcommittee to look after every single federal employee, no matter the level of pay, or what type of schedule or seniority they have. I have called today's hearing to discuss issues relating to temporary employees, who represent about nine percent of the total federal workforce. We know that seasonal temporary employees play a critical role in helping an agency accomplish its mission and carry out its mandates, yet, these employees operate largely under the radar screen.

Given the fact that in certain federal entities, namely the National Park Service and the Forest Service, seasonal temporary employees can comprise approximately 40% of the workforce at any given time, it is important that we take the time to seriously consider issues and concerns currently confronting this particular employee population. Often times, seasonal temporary employees have worked in the same capacity year after year, decade after decade. However, they receive no health care, retirement insurance, or other regular benefits accrued by permanent or term employees of the federal government.

While in the early 1990s, regulatory changes were made to reduce temporary employees' assignment time from four years to a maximum total of two possible years, thereby limiting the possibility of temporary employee abuses, it is clear that renewed oversight on this issue is needed.

As we explore existing temporary hiring authorities and current regulations, I believe it is important that we consider whether a path to permanency can be established for our temporary workers - many of whom have worked for multiple years and are fully cognizant of the merit principles in our hiring. Additionally, we need to look at how we can harness the sizeable talent and information acquired by the temporary employees.

Today's hearing will also provide us the chance to hear from the employer as well as the employee side of temporary hiring. My intent is for this afternoon's hearing to provide all of us with an opportunity to further the dialogue on various ideas and suggestions on how we can best reach a middle ground on some of these issues, so that our employees are properly taken care of without agency budgets being overly stretched.

It is my hope that the testimony and feedback we receive from today's witnesses will provide the Subcommittee with precise guidance and direction. Again, I thank each of you for being with us this afternoon, and I look forward to your participation.