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**JUNE 25, 2014**

**TOP NEWS STORIES**

## **PRESIDENT ISSUES MEMORANDUM ENHANCING WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITIES, WORK-LIFE PROGRAMS**

This week President Obama [hosted](#) a [White House Summit on Working Families](#), co-hosted by the Department of Labor and the [Center for American Progress](#).

The President also issued a [Presidential Memorandum](#) to federal agencies entitled “Enhancing Workplace Flexibilities and Work-Life Programs.”

The Presidential memo directs agency heads to ensure their employees are aware of their right to request work schedule flexibilities, noting that such flexibilities will be critical for the government “to attract, empower, and retain a talented and productive workforce in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

“It is the policy of the Federal Government to promote a culture in which managers and employees understand the workplace flexibilities and work-life programs available to them and how these measures can improve agency productivity and employee engagement. The Federal Government must also identify and eliminate any arbitrary or unnecessary barriers or limitations to the use of these flexibilities and develop new strategies consistent with statute and agency mission to foster a more balanced workplace,” the President states in the memo.

The Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will issue guidance to Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) within sixty (60) days, according to the memo.

## **INTERAGENCY EFFORT TO ADDRESS CHILD MIGRANT CRISIS AT SOUTHERN BORDER**

Since October, over 50,000 [unaccompanied alien minors](#), a [majority from Central American nations](#), have been arrested when attempting to cross the U.S. – Mexico border.

The situation has created a humanitarian crisis that has spurred a host of federal agencies, led by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), into action.

On June 2, the President issued a [presidential memorandum](#) directing DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson to establish an interagency Unified Coordination Group “to ensure unity of effort across the executive branch in responding to the humanitarian aspects of this situation, consistent with the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and Homeland

Security Presidential Directive-5 (Management of Domestic Incidents)(HSPD-5), including coordination with State, local, and other nonfederal entities.”

DHS Secretary Johnson [selected](#) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Craig Fugate as the Federal Coordinating Official.

“U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will maintain primary responsibility for border security operations at and between ports of entry and, working with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), provide for the proper care of unaccompanied children when they are temporarily in DHS custody. DHS will continue to coordinate closely with the Departments of Health and Human Services [HHS], State, Defense, the General Services Administration [GSA] and other agencies, to ensure a coordinated and rapid government-wide response in the short-term and to undertake broader, longer-term reforms to address the root cause behind these recent migration trends,” DHS Secretary Johnson [stated](#) earlier this month.

Federal law requires DHS/CBP to transfer unaccompanied undocumented children to HHS personnel within 72 hours of being detained. [Temporary quarters](#) are being established on military bases, excess federal property, and in border communities. The President has [asked Congress for \\$1.4 billion](#) in funding to address the “urgent humanitarian situation.”

Many of the child migrants are coming from nations experiencing violence, including Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico, fueled by a misperception that the U.S. will not remove children who make it into the country.

The U.S. government is [working with the governments](#) of those nations to address such rumors, as well as broader issues contributing to the flux of migrants, according to a press call with multiple agency officials describing the federal response.

## **“MENTAL HEALTH IS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THE WORKPLACE,” OPM MEMO STATES**

A [memo sent last week](#) to agency human resources directors and chief human capital officers (CHCOs) from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) highlights the issue of mental health in the federal workplace.

“We need to do everything we can to provide employees and their supervisors with tools to recognize impending problems and be able to respond appropriately,” OPM Director Katherine Archuleta and Pamela Hyde, Administrator Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) state in the memo.

Archuleta and Hyde cite national mental health statistics, including the economic impacts of lost productivity from employees dealing with mental health issues, including addictions.

The memo states that OPM and SAMHSA “recognize the critical role that health programs available through a worksite can play in reducing risk for mental health problems and suicide.” It notes that “a supportive worksite: 1) educates workers on the basics of mental health and the signs of distress (including suicide warning signs); 2) decreases concerns associated with seeking help; and 3) enhances emotional health through social connectedness, resilience, and improved problem-solving skills.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) are cited as a resource for employees in addressing and individual, family, or workplace issue they may be having, as well as mental health benefits offered through Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) insurance plans.

A [Supervisor Fact Sheet](#) and an [Employee Fact Sheet](#) were distributed along with the memo. The documents are meant to be shared with appropriate staff.

## FROM THE HILL

### **BIPARTISAN BILL PROVIDES TAX PARITY FOR CIVILIANS SERVING IN COMBAT ZONES**

Bi-partisan legislation introduced in May would extend the tax credit available to military personnel who serve in foreign combat zones to the civilian federal employees working alongside them.

The Combat Zone Tax Parity Act ([H.R. 4621](#)) was introduced by a trio of Virginia lawmakers, Rep. Rob Wittman (R), Rep. Frank Wolf (R), and Rep. Gerry Connolly (D).

Currently civilian employees serving in combat zones do not receive the same tax credit available to military personnel. The bill has not yet been considered in committee.

“Many of our dedicated civil servants answer a ‘call to duty’ that takes them away from their families and exposes them to imminent danger to life and limb,” [said](#) National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) President Joseph A. Beaudoin. “They may not wear uniforms, but they often stand shoulder to shoulder amidst hostile fire with those who do,” Beaudoin said.

## YGL PROFILES

### **AN INTERVIEW WITH A WORKFORCE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MANAGER**

Ms. Hester currently works as the Workforce Support and Development Program Manager at the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC) at Patrick Air Force Base (AFB) in Florida. AFTAC monitors nuclear treaties. Her Federal career also includes positions as the director of Workforce Support and Development at the Food and Drug Administration and director of Human Capital at US Department of Health and Human Services in the Washington, DC area.

#### **1. What is the best leadership lesson you've learned?**

Balance. To be honest, I’m still working on this one – daily! I’ve always admired those few leaders I’ve met along the way that seemed to manage a healthy balance. The marketplace offers abundant advice on methods of ensuring work-life balance. In my experience, from the view of the organization, work takes priority. Yet, when I focus on home and family, I know my home-life takes priority. Included in my balancing act are meeting the needs of the container, my body, which holds my mind and makes the long hours possible; and my soul or spirit, which gives me motivation, comfort, and peace. Regardless our spiritual beliefs, I find when I take the time to reflect, clear my mind, give thanks, exercise my body, and eat healthy, I feel more centered and stronger.

#### **2. How did you get to where you are today?**

I always give credit first to divine intervention. Perhaps an adage that works well here is, “Success is when preparation meets opportunity.” When I became a single mom, I did not realize how difficult it would be to balance work, raise a child alone, and keep up a home. Earlier in my career, I was passed over for higher management positions because I had not finished my degree. Shortly after training our third manager, I knew it was time to go back to school. So, I took classes in the evening, swapped babysitting on weekends with

family and friends, and several years later, completed my Bachelor of Science (BS) degree at the University of Maryland, University College (UMUC). The BS enabled me to secure a management position with more responsibility. Ten days after graduating, I began my weekend Master's Program at American University. So, the short answer is education was the missing ingredient for me to move up the corporate ladder, since I already had several years of experience. However, had I not prepared myself and been ready when the opportunities presented themselves, I would not have been qualified nor considered.

### **3. What leadership lessons do you try to convey to your team?**

Authenticity – be who you are. We are not all cut out to be leaders. We often have this image of what a good leader should be – attributes that may or may not be an integral part of who we are. While I agree that we can develop positive and effective behaviors in ourselves and others, at the end of day, we are who we are. As the famous adage goes, “To thine own self, be true.” So, in addition to the technical competencies required for leadership, here is a listing that I believe is the key to knowing if leadership is the path for you.

Leadership might be right for you if you are:

- Interested in supporting staff members dealing with personal concerns;
- Willing and able to shield and protect staff when needed;
- Competent at safeguarding confidential information both up and down the chain of command;
- Adept at balancing meeting the needs of the organization to accomplish the mission and demonstrating advocacy for the employee.

Oftentimes, I see those anxious to take on a leadership role for the extra salary. I would hope that employees realize that the attributes which contribute to being the best on the team are different from the ones that make a great manager. I encourage future leaders to learn how to manage the people, as well as the processes. My motto is to remember that most work is done through people.

### **4. What do you look for in potential employees when making hiring decisions?**

Managers, in collaboration with Human Resources (HR), have done a good job in formulating questions that gather information on a candidate's work experience and technical proficiencies. Where most organizations, including the Federal Government, could use improvement is in hiring for organization fit. This term does not mean assimilation into the organization as it currently exists; but, ensuring we ask questions for fit to determine if we are bringing someone onboard that will clash regularly with others on the team or will add value. Does the potential candidate have the emotional intelligence to deal with some of the possible conflicts on the team or with the methodologies in how the work is done? Does the candidate have a different perspective currently missing that will benefit the team? Have we asked a question that assesses situational leadership to see how a candidate will react in certain circumstances – especially if our organization has built-in constraints in the work, processes, systems or structures?

'Fit' also means ensuring that the team is ready for the person we are considering. What do we need to convey to ensure the candidate knows what to expect? Are we, “selling a bucket of roses or selling ourselves short?” We need to set a clear picture of the organization's operations, procedures, goals and objectives, as well as what works well and what does not work well.

If you are the potential candidate and these types of questions are not discussed, I recommend asking them yourself. Take charge of your future by ensuring you are the right candidate for this position and that the interviewer has conveyed a clear picture of the organization. I would urge you to do your homework on the organization and have a list of questions prepared that will help open a window into the organization that you are considering. Sometimes, you might get an offer for a position that may not be the best fit for you. When

you do get the right fit, you may get to work in a supportive environment that provides personal and career growth and development, where the people are inclusive, and the mission matters.

**5. What is a good book you have read recently?**

Quiet. The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking, by Susan Cain. She provides excellent insight into the world of introverts which she refers to as the Quiet Revolution. A third of people today are introverts living in a world where the extrovert style rules the way meetings are held, schools teach, and how leaders are selected. I appreciate her insights into the values introverts bring, especially in the workplace, and how I may better support their creativity. In the book, Ms. Cain shares many enlightening real-life stories that have positively impacted our culture.

**6. What do you do after work for fun or to relax?**

I would not say home improvement projects are relaxing; yet, for the last several years, I seem to be engaged in several large scale Do It Yourself (DIY) projects. I love to see old places refurbished and brought back to life again. Relaxing – O.K. I am a movie buff and enjoy seeing them on the “big screen.” Fun – Time with family and friends is fun!

**7. What is the best mistake you have ever made?**

Early on in my career, I accidentally dialed an incorrect phone number at work and spoke with a senior manager from one of our affiliate organizations. I made light of the situation, exchanged a few pleasantries, and joked that there must be a reason that I was supposed to speak with him; for example, he must have an open position for an up-and-coming future leader in the organization, so perhaps my fingers dialed the correct number. I was really trying to make light of my error, but the words were already out of my mouth. To my surprise, however, he replied, “Actually, I do have an opening and here is the announcement information. I appreciate your positive attitude and would encourage you to apply.” I did, and eventually got the position.

**8. What career accomplishment are you most proud of and why?**

My greatest career accomplishment is watching those who I have had the privilege of supervising/managing in the past either move up the chain of command; grow into strong, effective leaders; or, find the right fit for themselves in a new position. There are some leaders who enjoy the spotlight and thrive on public acknowledgement of their accomplishments, and while I do not shy away from podiums, I prefer to think of myself as the one behind the scenes helping make it happen for others. Another work-life adage I live by, “Life works great, especially if you do not care who gets the credit.”

**9. What is your latest goal or ambition and how do you plan to go about achieving it?**

I'm learning American Sign Language (ASL). I have had the honor of working with a couple of colleagues who were from the hearing impaired and/or deaf community and felt frustrated when we could only use email to speak with each other. Yes, I know that many of us in the hearing community only use email to communicate; but, that subject is a psychology class in itself. Unlike learning to speak English when arriving from another country, our deaf and hearing impaired colleagues only have ASL. If we want to communicate, we need to learn ASL. How to achieve my goal? Continue to take classes; take advantage of every opportunity to attend silent lunches, dinners, plays and events; and speak with my colleagues whenever possible in my 'broken ASL.' Like the joke, “How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, Practice, Practice.”

## 10. What is the most important thing you have learned in your career?

It is difficult for me to say the one most important thing, as I believe many life lessons have positively impacted who I am today. So, the one overall which I will claim today for this article, is 'to remain curious.' Often the presenting issue in situations is not the actual issue or problem. If I continue to ask questions, stay inquisitive to learn more, and not jump up my 'Ladder of Inference' (Chris Argyris) or immediately move to problem solving, I may gather enough information to find the actual source of the issue.

## 11. What motivates you?

- Connecting what we do to organizational outcomes, especially when in support of a mission that matters!
- Working for senior leaders who practice effective stewardship: decisive guardianship in meeting the mission of the organization, while effectively managing the needs of their staff.
- Organizations where the strengths of staff members are emphasized and utilized.
- Creating a diverse, high-performing team working towards the same goal, while safeguarding and balancing the individual and their roles and character, while maintaining the high integrity required in today's government.

## 12. What was the biggest career risk you took? Did it turn out positively or negatively for you? What did you learn?

I believe my biggest career risk was coming into the Federal Government. I am sure that sounds like an oxymoron to some, but I had the opportunity to earn more money outside of Federal service when I accepted my first position ten years ago. Of all the advice from family and friends when I made the decision, I appreciated the commentary, "You have always measured your success in comparison to your paycheck; maybe this is your opportunity to make a difference in the public sector." Sometimes, I have accepted less or taken a downgraded position to begin a new occupation or function within an organization. Sometimes, I have taken a lateral move to join an organization, group or team where I thought I could thrive. I believe my lesson learned is to let measuring success be more about stoking the flames of my passions in life. My mom would say, "If you have to do something 40+ hours a week, you might as well enjoy it."

*Written by Lynn Martin, Young Government Leaders.*

[\*Young Government Leaders\*](#) is a non-profit professional organization founded and led by young government employees. YGL strives to build a community of leadership for young feds through professional development events, networking opportunities, social events, seminars, fellowships and scholarships.

## CAREER TIP OF THE WEEK

### FIVE TIPS FOR NAVIGATING A SES VACANCY

Let's face it—pulling up a Senior Executive Service vacancy on your monitor can be a bit overwhelming. A resume, five Executive Core Qualifications, and *how many* Technical Qualifications? Gulp.

One of the best things you can do to reduce this overwhelming feeling is to break the application materials down into bite-sized chunks, and then reverse-engineer your time so that you have a plan for getting it all done well before the job closes.

These five tips will also help:

**1. Read the entire vacancy from top to bottom.** It's important to take a few minutes and do this, with a keen attention to detail. Write down any questions you might have.

**2. Take a close look at the duties and qualifications section.** Think of the information in these areas as questions, and ask yourself, “Will I be able to show in my resume that I possess some, most, or even all of these skills, experiences, and education?” If the answer to all those “questions” is no, that could be a red flag.

**3. Take a look at any Technical Qualifications.** Ask yourself if you will be able to provide strong narrative responses that show you have relevant and recent experience in the technical areas they want to see. Again, if the answer is no, it could be a red flag that this job isn’t the best fit.

**4. Carefully read the How to Apply and Required Documents section.** This is critical, as each agency may have slightly different instructions. Sometimes you can email in your resume, other times you can upload your own resume to your USAJOBS account, and still other times, you will be required to actually use the USAJOBS resume builder. Likewise, sometimes there are length restrictions or other formatting requirements.

**5. Read the vacancy again to make sure you didn’t miss anything.** At least scan the whole vacancy again, and then email the agency contact with any questions about qualifications, timelines, or how to format your documents in terms of length, font size, etc.

By following these five simple tips, you can minimize the chances of missing critical information, or of spending your time applying for something that clearly isn’t a good match based on your skills, education, and experience.

*Lee Kelley is an Iraq war veteran and former Army Captain who now serves as the senior writer on CareerPro Global’s writing team. Leveraging the company’s vast expertise in assisting thousands of SES and federal job seekers, Lee has personally developed hundreds of resumes and more than a thousand ECQs. He is also the Director of Training and Veteran Transitions, and has provided USAJOBS resume-writing workshops to hundreds of federal employees and our military. In addition, Lee is an author and executive coach. He co-authored the book Roadmap to the Senior Executive Service: How to Find SES Jobs, Determine Your Qualifications, and Develop Your SES Application. His latest book is titled Inside Marine One: Four U.S. Presidents, One Proud Marine, and the World’s Most Amazing Helicopter.*

## CASE LAW UPDATE

### SUPREME COURT FINDS IN FAVOR OF FIRST AMENDMENT PROTECTION FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

In 2006, a Central Alabama Community College (“CACC”) employee became the director of a program for at-risk youth. While reviewing the finances for the program, he discovered that an Alabama state representative was on the program’s payroll, despite never having provided any work or services for the program. When the employee notified the CACC president about his concerns, he was warned by the president and CACC’s attorney that putting an end to the state representative’s “employment” would not be wise for either CACC, or for the employee. The employee ignored this warning and terminated the Alabama state representative when she refused to report to work. The employee was later subpoenaed for his testimony in two federal criminal trials for mail fraud and theft involving a program receiving public funds. The employee testified that the state representative had not reported to work and had not submitted time sheets. The employee testified that he instructed the state representative — verbally and in writing — to start reporting daily to the office, but that she had responded by telling him that she had gotten her job through her connections with the Executive Secretary of the Alabama Education Association, and requested to be allowed to “continue to serve the CITY Program in the same manner as [she had] in the past.” The state representative was convicted of mail fraud and theft involving a program receiving public funds, and was sentenced to 30 months in prison.

Subsequently, the president of the CACC fired each of the twenty-nine employees of the at-risk youth program. Shortly thereafter, the firings were all rescinded, with two exceptions: the employee (former program Director)

who terminated the state representative and one other. The employee-former Director filed suit in federal district court of the Northern District of Alabama, claiming that he was retaliated against due to his testimony regarding the state representative. The district court granted summary judgment to the CACC and the employee appealed to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. The Eleventh Circuit's opinion in favor of the CACC president, the public employer, ruled that an employee does not enjoy First Amendment protection when the speech was made pursuant to his official duties, a category which the court of appeals stated included speech which "owes its existence to the employee's professional responsibilities and is a product that 'the employer itself has commissioned or created.'" According to the court of appeals, subpoenaed testimony fell into this category.

The United States Supreme Court granted certiorari, and on Thursday, June 19, 2014, the Supreme Court reversed the Eleventh Circuit's decision, holding that the First Amendment protects a public employee who provides truthful sworn testimony, compelled by a subpoena, outside the course of his ordinary job responsibilities.

Justice Sotomayor delivered the Court's opinion, and opened the analysis by stating that "[s]peech by citizens on matters of public concern lies at the heart of the First Amendment, which 'was fashioned to assure unfettered interchange of ideas for the bringing about of political and social changes desired by the people.'" The Court noted that this relationship with the First Amendment does not change when speech concerns information related to or learned through public employment: "[a]fter all, public employees do not renounce their citizenship when they accept employment, and this Court has cautioned time and again that public employers may not condition employment on the relinquishment of constitutional rights." However, the Court also recognized the countervailing interest of the government expressed in *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, 547 U.S. 410 (2006), which states that government employers (like private employers) need a significant degree of control over their employees' words and actions in order to provide for the efficient provision of public services.

The Court employed the *Garcetti* two-step inquiry into whether a public employee's speech is entitled to protection. The first step of the *Garcetti* inquiry is whether the employee spoke as a citizen on a matter of public concern. The Court applied that inquiry to the case at hand as follows: whether the employee's testimony at the state representative's trials was speech as a citizen on a matter of public concern. According to the Court, "it clearly is."

The Court held that truthful testimony under oath by a public employee outside the scope of his ordinary job duties is speech as a citizen for First Amendment purposes. The Court disagreed with the Eleventh Circuit, which "gave short shrift to the nature of sworn judicial statements and ignored the obligation borne by all witnesses testifying under oath" when it found immaterial that the employee spoke only after he was subpoenaed. Distinguishing the present case from *Garcetti*, which the Court stated was read too broadly by the Eleventh Circuit, the Court held that the employee's subpoenaed testimony was "far removed" from the speech in *Garcetti*, which was an internal memorandum prepared by a deputy district attorney for his supervisors, a task the deputy district attorney was paid to perform by his government employer.

Noting that the *Garcetti* decision "said nothing" about speech that merely relates to public employment or concerns information learned in the course of public employment, the Court clarified the critical question under *Garcetti*: whether the speech at issue is itself ordinarily within the scope of an employee's duties, not whether it merely concerns those duties.

Going back to its decision in *Pickering v. Board of Ed. Of Township High School Dist., Will Cty.*, 391 U.S. 563 (1968), the Court observed that its precedent recognizes the "special value" of speech by public employees on subject matter related to their employment due to their increased likelihood to have informed opinions regarding that subject matter. In *San Diego v. Roe*, 543 U.S. 77 (2004), for example, the Court stated that public employees are "uniquely qualified to comment" on matters concerning government policies that are also of interest to the public.



The context of the present case (a public corruption scandal) made the “special value” of speech by public employees “especially evident” to the Court when it held that it “would be antithetical to our jurisprudence to conclude that the very kind of speech necessary to prosecute corruption by public officials...may never form the basis for a First Amendment retaliation claim.” The Court also stated that such a rule would place public employees who are witness to corruption in a lose-lose, “impossible” situation, obligated to testify truthfully but afraid of retaliation and the loss of their job. Based on the aforementioned precedent, the Court held that the employee’s subpoenaed testimony was speech as a citizen.

Turning next to whether the employee’s speech as a citizen was also on a matter of public concern, the Court cited *Garcetti* (“Exposing governmental inefficiency and misconduct is a matter of considerable significance”) to support their holding that it was a matter of “significant” public concern.

The second step of the *Garcetti* analysis, which the Court turned to next, is “whether the relevant government entity had an adequate justification for treating the employee differently from any other member of the general public” when he spoke as a citizen on a matter of public concern. In *Connick v. Myers*, 461 U.S. 138 (1983), the Court recognized that government employers often have legitimate interests in promoting efficiency and integrity in the discharge of employees’ official duties and maintaining discipline in the public service. However, the Court stated that in this case, the respondent had not, and indeed could not, assert any government interest that tips the balance in its favor: the employee’s testimony was not false, was not erroneous, and the employee had not disclosed any sensitive, confidential, or privileged information when he testified regarding the state representative’s employment with the CITY program. Therefore, the Court concluded that the employee’s speech was entitled to protection under the First Amendment, and that the Eleventh Circuit had erred in dismissing the employee’s claim of retaliation on that basis.

One final question, whether the claims against the president of the CACC who fired the employee should be dismissed due to qualified immunity, was presented to the Court. The Court determined that because no Supreme Court or Eleventh Circuit precedent was sufficiently clear to cast doubt on the president’s ability to fire an employee “on account of testimony the employee gave, under oath and outside the scope of his ordinary job responsibilities,” the Court held that the president could have reasonably believed that his firing of the employee was proper.

For the above stated reasons, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the Eleventh Circuit’s judgment as to the claims against the CACC president in his individual capacity, but reversed the judgment of the Eleventh Circuit as to the dismissal of the employee’s claim of retaliation for speech protected by the First Amendment, and remanded the case for further proceedings consistent with its opinion.

[You can read the full case, \*Lane v. Franks\*, here.](#)

*This case law update was written by [Conor D. Dirks](#), associate attorney, [Shaw Bransford & Roth, PC](#).*

*For thirty years, Shaw Bransford & Roth P.C. has provided superior representation on a wide range of federal employment law issues, from representing federal employees nationwide in administrative investigations, disciplinary and performance actions, and Bivens lawsuits, to handling security clearance adjudications and employment discrimination cases.*

## **GEICO’S GOOD STUFF ARCHIVES FORMS FOIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*GEICO’s Good Stuff is a column series highlighting great stuff happening in the federal community.*

This week the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) [hosted an open meeting](#) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Advisory Committee.

The FOIA Advisory Committee was established in accordance with the second U.S. Open Government National Action Plan released in December 2013.

The FOIA Advisory Committee is charged with discussing improvements to FOIA administration, developing consensus and recommendations for improving FOIA administration, and soliciting public comments to inform its work. The committee's recommendations may include legislative action, policy changes, and executive actions.

The committee has twenty members, appointed by the Archivist of the United States. Members include representatives from federal agencies, law firms, and public and private organizations.

The FOIA Advisory Committee operates under Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) rules, and a video of the open meeting can be accessed at <https://ogis.archives.gov/foia-advisory-committee.htm>.

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## HEARD INSIDE THE BELTWAY

Congress micromanages decision-making at the VA because Washington politicians are more interested in claiming credit for establishing new benefits or VA centers than making sure veterans are getting the care they were promised and earned.

*Senator Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK) in a [scathing 124-page oversight report](#) entitled: "Friendly Fire: Death, Delay, and Dismay at the VA."*

## WEEKLY LEADERSHIP REFLECTION

Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it's amazing what they can accomplish.

*Sam Walton*