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Statement from Marcus Hill, President of the Senior Executives Association, on Schedule Policy/Career Final Regulation and Initial Implementing Guidance

The Senior Executives Association does not concur with the final regulation and implementing guidance for Schedule Policy/Career, which removes long-standing procedural safeguards without providing meaningful, compensating protections to preserve the integrity of the career workforce; SEA's position on this remains consistent with our past statements (see <https://bit.ly/4q6Zr71> and <https://bit.ly/4806rMS>). As the Initial Implementing Guidance makes clear, "Agencies may take personnel actions such as suspensions, demotions, and terminations against Schedule Policy/Career employees without [the procedures established under chapters 43 and 75 of title 5, United States Code]."

SEA has consistently supported strong accountability for senior leaders and policy-shaping career professionals. Accountability, however, is most effective when it is fair, transparent, and grounded in a merit-based civil service system that values expertise, continuity, and lawful decision-making. The final rule moves in the opposite direction by concentrating discretion while weakening the due-process protections that have historically insulated career officials from politicization.

Absent clear guardrails, these changes risk transforming professional policy roles into de facto at-will positions subject to shifting political pressures. That outcome would politicize the federal workforce, undermine the merit system principles that Congress has repeatedly affirmed, and erode trust between career professionals and political leadership.

Over time, the loss of these safeguards invites instability across agencies—discouraging candid advice, accelerating attrition among experienced leaders, and weakening institutional capacity precisely when government faces increasingly complex policy, operational, and security challenges.

The preamble to the final rule makes a number of assertions regarding the applicability of these provisions to the Senior Executive Service, which would logically also apply to related senior level positions. SEA will continue to review these and other sections of the justification to the final that may directly or indirectly impact the SES, and may recommend further clarifications in the future.

SEA remains committed to constructive engagement on reforms that improve performance and accountability. But reforms that weaken merit protections without replacing them with credible, enforceable alternatives jeopardize the professionalism and continuity on which effective government depends.

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About the Senior Executives Association

The Senior Executives Association (SEA) is a professional association representing career members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) and other senior career leaders across the federal government. SEA promotes effective government leadership, accountability, and the preservation of a professional, nonpartisan civil service.