

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from Mary Kate Whalen, President of the Senior Executives Association, on OPM's final rule on SES Candidate Development Programs

"The Senior Executives Association welcomes OPM's final rule on SES Candidate Development Programs. Preparing the next generation of federal executives is essential work, and we appreciate OPM's sustained attention to building a leadership corps that is capable, accountable, and ready to serve.

When OPM proposed this rule, SEA urged a modernization grounded in nonpartisan, objective executive training and a development framework that prepares career leaders to support the current Administration and every future Administration with equal skill. We are encouraged that the final rule reflects much of the input offered during the comment period. OPM preserved meaningful agency flexibility, removing the fixed allocation of training hours across topics, setting placement-rate expectations through guidance rather than a rigid regulatory floor, and retaining a 12 to 24 month program length in place of the shorter, more compressed schedule first proposed. We also welcome the new provision allowing OPM to establish a governmentwide program and to support resource-sharing among agencies, which will help extend high-quality leadership development to smaller and resource-constrained agencies.

As agencies put these standards into practice, SEA will watch two areas closely. First, the final rule increases program requirements, including additional training hours, a second executive assessment, expanded coaching, and a longer developmental assignment, and the associated costs will fall unevenly across agencies. We encourage OPM to monitor that burden and to help agencies use the coaching networks and shared resources the rule contemplates. Second, executive development must remain anchored in merit and the Executive Core Qualifications, preparing leaders who serve the Constitution and the American people across administrations. We appreciate OPM's affirmation of these principles and will continue to support their consistent application as the program matures.

SEA looks forward to continuing to work with OPM so that SES Candidate Development Programs produce the skilled, mission-driven executives the Administration and future administrations will rely on."

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About the Senior Executives Association

The Senior Executives Association (SEA) is a professional association representing Senior Executive Service members and other career federal executives. Founded in 1980, SEA's goals are to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of the federal government, to advance the professionalism and advocate the interests of career federal executives, and to enhance public recognition of their contributions. For more information, visit www.seniorexecs.org.