



The voice of career Federal executives since 1980

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Creation of Schedule F in the Excepted Service Dangerously Erodes the Merit Based Civil Service to Advance Political Propaganda

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Bob Corsi, Interim President of the Senior Executives Association (SEA) – the nonprofit, nonpartisan professional association that has since 1980 been the voice of the career Senior Executive Service (SES) and senior career leaders across the federal government – released the following statement regarding the President’s Executive Order on Creating Schedule F in the Excepted Service:

“The President’s executive order attempts to bypass the laws of this country to embed an additional political corps into the federal workforce. In our system of government, political appointees serve at the pleasure of the President and owe fidelity to the President they serve under. Career civil servants and uniformed service members take the oath of office, not to the President, but to the Constitution.

“This executive order is nothing more than propaganda intended to further the message that career federal workers are corrupt and not dedicated to serving all Americans equally. The administration’s endorsement of this philosophy plays directly into the hands of our adversaries who seek to foment civil unrest and undermine the foundations of our democracy.

“Taxpayers already fund thousands of political appointees in the executive branch, through Presidential Appointments, requiring the advice and consent of the Senate and Schedule C political appointments. These positions already cost the public hundreds of millions and provide the public no transparency or visibility into those who are not confirmed by the Senate. Deliberate actions by Congress and the Supreme Court have differentiated these partisan positions from the career federal workforce which serves not based on political allegiance, but based on merit.

“Civil servants do not consider partisan politics when executing their continuously vital missions, including conducting vital health research, overseeing economic relief packages, protecting our national security and elected leaders, and delivering essential emergency aid. These missions require a merit-based test, not a loyalty test.

“On the eve of a general election, this executive order is merely a pretense for converting vast swaths of the career federal bureaucracy into politically appointed spoils positions. The primary qualification for scientists at NASA, IT and cybersecurity employees at the Department of Defense, and doctors at the Department of Veterans Affairs should be expertise in their field, not loyalty to the president.

“Under the guise of increasing accountability, Schedule F ironically adds an additional layer to the federal bureaucracy which will make agencies increasingly volatile and inefficient. The order carelessly ignores the reason Constitutionally-based employee protections exist in the federal workforce: to ensure taxpayer services can be delivered with equity to all Americans and without regard for partisan affiliation. The order brushes the surface of legitimate issues such as promoting transparency and accountability, but proposes shortsighted, factually deceitful solutions to be enacted with little regard for the root cause of issues identified. This order goes against decades of research and thought leadership by good government groups advocating for an increasingly merit-based and competitive workforce, instead choosing to inject the workforce with positions tied to vague performance metrics based on political talking points.

“With this order, there is no longer an independent civil service. This is how the party-run governments of authoritarian-led countries are organized and staffed - by political leadership who historically succeed by serving an elite political class, rather than service to all citizens equitably.

“America’s nonpartisan civil service has been the envy of the free world for over a century for a reason. While it is not perfect, it is the premier alternative to a one-party state in which government services are determined by partisan affiliations. This order chooses propaganda over policy and partisanship over progress. The American people deserve better than the erosion of their federal government for partisan propaganda. They deserve a merit-based government. With an initial implementation date just a day before a potential new administration enters the White House, this order should be a cause for alarm for all citizens who expect their government to deliver goods and services without regard for or consideration of political affiliation or fear of reprisal for speaking truth to power.”

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The Senior Executives Association (SEA) is a professional association representing Senior Executive Service members and other career Federal leaders. 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.