November 29, 2017

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), including thousands of federal workers, I urge you to vote against the “Ensuring a Qualified Civil Service Act of 2017” (H.R. 4182). AFSCME opposes this unnecessary anti-worker bill because it would double the minimum probationary period for nearly all federal civilian employees from one year to two years. There is simply no need for this lengthy extension and worse, it would reduce operational effectiveness and efficiency.

It is important to note that, if enacted, this new minimum two-year probation would not even start until after a worker completes any required formal training program or required certification or licensure. For example, if a job requires an 18-month training program, adding the bill’s subsequent two-year probation means a worker remains on probation for three and one half years. This is without precedent or rational. As a result, the period is simply too long and undermines employee morale and makes it more difficult to hire quality workers. Furthermore, it undermines civil service protections and the merit system, which function to safeguard federal employees and government operations.

H.R. 4182 also fails to address underlying performance evaluations, occupational metrics, or related work issues. Yet, the main reason for probation is to use these tools to evaluate a worker’s capacity to perform their work. A competent manager does not need more than one year to evaluate an employee’s abilities. If problems subsequently emerge, federal managers have ample authority to take remedial action. This bill is not needed and would create new problems.

We urge you to vote against H.R. 4182.

Sincerely,

Scott Frey  
Director of Federal Government Affairs

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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