December 22, 2025

The Honorable Scott Kupor
Director
The Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW, Washington, D.C
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Director Kupor,

We write to express concern regarding the substantial delays in federal retirement processing recently reported on by *Federal News Network*, following the Trump Administration's implementation of the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP) and other workforce reduction policies. This foreseeable and avoidable administrative failure is the clear result of an Administration that has prioritized a purge of the federal civil service over government efficiency, leaving thousands of federal employees in administrative and financial limbo.

That priority was made explicit in a recent blog post in which the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) referred to the forced departure of more than 300,000 federal employees, either through reductions in force (RIFs) or through pressure to leave via the DRP or the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA), as a "success." The tone of this post makes clear that the Administration's primary objective over the past year has been to gut the federal workforce at any cost. Federal employees, who devoted decades to careers in public service and provided valuable, non-political expertise to federal agencies now find themselves trapped in a prolonged cycle of delayed payments and benefits, lost paperwork, limited communication, and financial and administrative uncertainty. This is a direct result of the Administration's eagerness to force departures without adequate planning.

As outlined in the recent reporting, the federal retirement process requires coordinated action across multiple entities. Retirement applications are first prepared and reviewed by an individual's employing agency human resources office, then processed by payroll providers, and then transmitted to OPM for adjudication, interim annuity determination, and final benefit calculation. The influx of new retirement applications under the DRP, combined with government-wide RIFs and early-out packages have reduced both the capacity and staffing levels of agency human resources offices and supporting organizations. This has put the federal retirement system under enormous strain.

In November of this year alone, OPM received nearly 23,400 retirement applications. They received 20,300 in October, more than triple the volumes seen during the same period in 2024. In all, OPM's retirement inventory has grown to more than 48,000 pending applications, nearly four times the number of applications the agency aims to have on hand at once. Breakdowns or delays at any stage of the processing pipeline can stall an entire application. This surge of applications caused by the Administration's policies has now overwhelmed agency HR offices and payroll providers before many cases even reach OPM, a bottleneck the Administration should have anticipated and planned for if it were serious about efficiency. As Rob Shriver, former Acting Director of OPM during the Biden Administration, observed, "HR was already understaffed—now lots have left, and they

have an ever-increasing workload. It's all going to create backlogs." Shriver, in the same article, went on to note the "incredible frustration" from DRP employees and others currently trying to separate from government service.

OPM is continuing to prioritize electronic retirement submissions and broader modernization efforts, which, while necessary, are insufficient to address one of the core drivers of current delays. Agencies are facing significant understaffing in their human resources offices at the same time that many employees who departed under the DRP lost access to internal communication systems upon separation and were provided with no points of contact. As a result, retiring employees are often unable to reach already overburdened HR staff to correct errors, confirm receipt of paperwork, or obtain basic status updates. This further compounds delays and administrative failures across the retirement process.

The scale of current delays was foreseeable given the Administration's actions to purge the federal workforce. If the Administration cared at all about efficiency, the impact of its policies on agency human resources capacity and retirement processing should have been anticipated and planned for prior to implementation of policies that promoted mass employee departures. Because this did not occur, the federal retirement system has been reduced to chaos and continues to face unprecedented inefficiencies. As a result, our constituents are unable to receive the benefits they have rightly earned after years of service to the American people.

Given our concerns, we request a response to the following questions by January 29, 2026:

1. What guidance has OPM provided to agencies to ensure that retiring employees who lost access to government email and internal systems can continue to communicate with human resources offices using personal contact information?
2. What steps is OPM taking to address retirement applications that remain stalled at agencies or payroll providers and have not yet been transmitted to OPM for processing?
3. How is OPM assessing the impact of agency human resources staffing reductions on retirement processing delays across the federal government?
4. How does OPM track and account for delays that occur at agencies and payroll providers, rather than solely within OPM's own retirement processing timelines?
5. OPM has heavily advertised its new digital retirement tool, the Online Retirement Application (ORA), and promoted its role in retirement processing reform. Please provide a list of named agencies (with components when applicable) that have wholly adopted and launched ORA for their entire HR teams and workforce. For agencies that remain in interim status, please provide a list of agencies (by component when applicable) and what the adoption status is, and the estimate for full usage. Please also provide what number and percentage of current cases are and are not using ORA, what the reasons are for non-adoption and usage, and what steps remain to be taken by OPM and employing agencies for full implementation.
6. Please list any step and/or discrete action under the end-to-end retirement processing process that is not captured by ORA.
7. What has been the impact on OPM's customer service and support for the existing retiree population amidst the growing number of new retirements, and have there been any staffing or work assignment changes within the components that manage this process since December 2024?
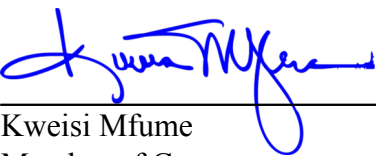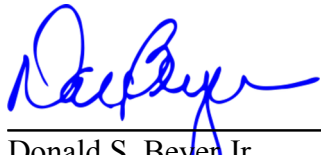
Sincerely,

James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress

Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress

Robert Garcia
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress