

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2025

The Honorable Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Secretary of Labor
200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Chavez-DeRemer:

We write to raise our objections to the chaotic series of actions taken by the Department of Labor (“the Department”) over the past seven weeks. The Department has illegally fired an unknown number of staff that may result in diminished services to workers owed back wages due to employer wage theft; reduce efforts to ensure compliance with requirements for parity for mental health and substance abuse benefits under private health plans; and weaken support for critical workforce training programs.¹² This also will undermine the ability of the Department to effectively administer and oversee federal funds, exposing them to increased risk for waste, fraud, and abuse.³

If the administration’s goal was to root out waste, fraud, and abuse of federal funding and promote the most effective use of federal funds under the law to address challenges workers and families face; we could work together to address those shared goals. However, we don’t believe these results will be achieved by mass firings and indiscriminate workforce reductions. These appear to primarily serve the interest of Congressional Republicans and President Trump in claiming savings in the federal budget, which they intend to use to pay for their tax breaks for billionaires and large corporations.⁴ Yet, these savings have been wildly exaggerated even though some of their effects are real.^{5 6 7}

¹ <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2025/02/see-which-federal-agencies-are-firing-new-hires/403033/?oref=ge-related-article>

² <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/trumps-federal-workforce-cuts-hit-labor-department-enforcement>

³ https://www.oig.dol.gov/public/DOL-OIG%202024%20Top%20Management%20and%20Performance%20Challenges_Final.pdf

⁴ <https://americansfortaxfairness.org/atf-coalition-letter-opposing-extension-trump-tax-scam/>

⁵ <https://why.org/articles/doge-overstates-savings-federal-contracts/>

⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/02/22/doge-savings-found-list-analysis/>

⁷ <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/trumps-federal-workforce-cuts-hit-labor-department-enforcement>

We are deeply concerned about the impacts of the administration's personnel decisions to date. Put simply, federal workers who have taken an oath to serve the American people are being terminated without cause, placed on leave in violation of the law, and facing reductions in force and reorganizations that will only add to the direct cost to taxpayers and our nation's workforce and families.⁸

Given the President's disregard for the law and the need for stability and productivity in government, it's critical for the Department to provide accurate, timely responses on its use of taxpayer resources provided by the laws passed by Congress. We request you provide written answers to the following questions as soon as possible, but not later than March 21, 2025:

1. For each agency and office and associated appropriation, please provide the number of staff placed on paid administrative leave since January 20th as of the pay period including January 23, 2025 and the most recent pay period.
2. For each agency and office and associated appropriation, please provide the total salaries and benefits costs for staff placed on paid administrative leave since January 20th as of the pay period including January 23, 2025 and the most recent pay period. For the Department in total, please provide the estimated total, annualized salaries and benefits costs incurred for employees placed on administrative leave since January 20th.
3. On January 28, 2025, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) sent a so-called "Fork in the Road" email to more than two million federal employees offering the opportunity to take "deferred resignation" by February 6, 2025. For each agency and office and associated appropriation, please provide:
 - a. The number of employees that offered to resign as part of the deferred resignation program.
 - b. The number of employees whose resignations were accepted as part of the deferred resignation program.
 - c. The number and types of duties re-assigned from employees whose resignations were accepted as part of the deferred resignation program.
 - d. The number and types of duties eliminated from employees whose resignations were accepted as part of the deferred resignation program.
 - e. The roles and number of personnel excluded from the deferred resignation program.

⁸ <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/latest-memos/guidance-on-agency-rif-and-reorganization-plans-requested-by-implementing-the-president-s-department-of-government-efficiency-workforce-optimization-initiative.pdf>

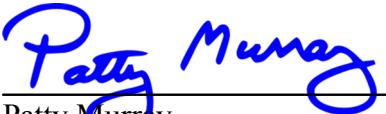
- f. For the Department in total, the estimated total salaries and benefits costs in fiscal year 2025 for employees whose resignations were accepted as part of the deferred resignation program.
4. The Department has fired an unknown number of probationary employees, some of whom have apparently been recently re-instated.⁹ For each agency and office and associated appropriation, please provide:
 - a. The number of probationary employees fired.
 - b. The number of fired probationary employees with unacceptable performance ratings reflected on official documentation prior to January 20, 2025.
 - c. The number of probationary employees fired and subsequently re-hired.
 - d. For the Department in total, the estimated total salaries and benefits costs in fiscal year 2025 for fired probationary employees.
 - e. The number of probationary employees fired who were veterans.
 - f. The number of probationary employees fired who were veterans and subsequently re-hired.
 - g. The number of probationary employees fired with disabilities.
 - h. The number of probationary employees fired with disabilities and subsequently re-hired.
 - i. The total cost of these firing and re-hiring actions and estimated lost productivity.
5. The Executive Order entitled, “Restoring Accountability to Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce” seeks to create a new Schedule Policy/Career in the excepted service for policy-influencing positions. For each agency and office and associated appropriation:
 - a. Please provide the number of positions reviewed for inclusion in the new Schedule Policy/Career.
 - b. Please provide the number of positions to be recommended for inclusion in the new Schedule Policy/Career.
 - c. Please identify the number of positions in which employees would disregard the law at the request of the President to implement administration policies.

⁹ <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/terminated-labor-department-employees-reinstated-union-says>

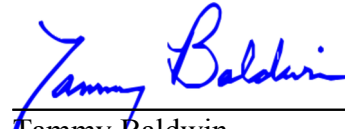
6. The President and his team have directed all agencies to develop Agency Reorganization Plans in phases through mid-April.¹⁰ Please provide us with a briefing of such plans no later than seven days after the Department submits such plan to the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on Education and Workforce



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

¹⁰ <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/latest-memos/guidance-on-agency-rif-and-reorganization-plans-requested-by-implementing-the-president-s-department-of-government-efficiency-workforce-optimization-initiative.pdf>