

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 12, 2025

Mr. Charles Ezell
Acting Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Acting Director Ezell:

On April 17, we held a roundtable discussion at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard with the Secretary of the Navy and leaders from both the shipyard and the submarine industrial base. During that meeting, we were made aware that nearly 150 personnel have received initial job offers for civilian general schedule (GS) positions at the shipyard which have been approved by Secretary Phelan but have not been processed through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). As a result, individuals who are needed to fill roles critical to our national security cannot be fully onboarded into their positions.

On March 18, 2025, Mr. Jules Hurst, Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, issued guidance directing that “positions at depots, shipyards, arsenals, and maintenance facilities” would be exempt from the current civilian hiring freeze.¹ In keeping with that directive and with Secretary Phelan’s approval for the hiring of these nearly 150 new shipyard workers, we request that you provide the following information no later than May 16, 2025:

1. What screening and/or processing of hiring decisions approved by Department of Defense leadership is conducted by OPM prior to final onboarding of new employees?
2. How long does OPM require to conduct its internal processing of new hires for the public shipyards?
3. How long does OPM anticipate that it will take to complete processing of the backlog of positions that have been approved by Secretary Phelan for employment at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard?

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

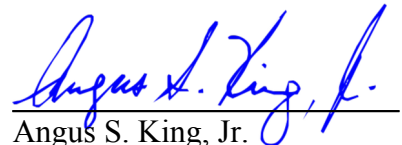
Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

¹ Jules Hurst, III. “Guidance on Hiring Freeze Exemptions for the Civilian Workforce.” Memorandum for Senior Pentagon Leadership, Commanders of the Combatant Commands, Defense Agency and DOD Field Activity Directors. March 18, 2025. Page 3.

CC: The Honorable John Phelan, Secretary of the Navy