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Res. No. 979

Resolution condemning the Trump Administration for the planned dissolution of the United States Office of Personnel Management

By Council Member Miller

Whereas, The United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM) was established by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 as a result of an effort to reorganize the Civil Service Commission, which had previously laid the foundations for an impartial, professional civil service based on the merit system; and

Whereas, Since its establishment, the OPM has been responsible for personnel management of the civil service of the federal government, specifically including: directing human resources and employee management services; administering retirement benefits; managing healthcare and insurance programs; overseeing merit-based and inclusive hiring into the civil service; and providing a secure employment process; and

Whereas, Although the OPM serves an important role in the effective operation and management of the

federal government, the Trump Administration believes that this agency, and other federal agencies, are ineffective and need to be reorganized; and

Whereas, Thus, on March 13, 2017, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13781 entitled “Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch,” with the intention to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the executive branch of the federal government by directing the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop and propose a comprehensive reorganization plan; and

Whereas, In June 2018, a plan entitled “Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century” was released that detailed how the federal government would be reorganized; and

Whereas, Importantly, this plan detailed that the OPM would be completely dismantled, with its’ responsibilities and activities divided up into three departments-the OPM’s massive background investigation operation would be moved to the Department of Defense; the OPM’s human resources role, including training, pay, and hiring, would be moved to the Federal Services Administration; and the OPM’s high-level policies governing federal employees would be moved to the OMB; and

Whereas, The reorganization of the OPM is expected to be performed in the fall of 2019 as part of an executive order, however, an announcement by President Trump regarding further details will likely occur in the summer of 2019, according to White House officials; and

Whereas, If the plan is successful, the OPM would be the first major federal agency to be eliminated since World War II, which may ultimately set the stage for even more agencies and departments to be eliminated and/or consolidated, according to The Washington Post; and

Whereas, In light of this plan to dismantle the OPM, advocates and unions have voiced opposition, specifically in regards to how OMB will be taking over high-level policies governing federal employees, as this could lead to the politicization of the civil service system with political appointees close to the White House being installed, according to The Washington Post; and

Whereas, In addition, federal employees are highly suspicious of the plan and the impact it will have because they have watched the Trump Administration undermine them in attempts to freeze their pay, weaken their unions, and implement faster firing and harsher discipline policies, according to The Washington Post; and

Whereas, Notably, the American Federation of Government Employees, who represent about 700,000 federal and D.C. government workers, have publicly opposed the Trump Administration's plan for the OPM, stating that it would be highly dangerous because it would: destroy the merit-based civil service system; politicize personnel policy, as OMB is inherently political due to its role in producing the President's budget; diminish the importance of having a centralized personnel office; and cause an unknown and unforeseeable impact, as the plan simply does not provide the public with enough detailed information on the effects of the plan; and

Whereas, The planned dissolution of the OPM is relevant to New York State and thus, New York City, as the plan may create a number of negative impact that will be felt by all federal workers nationwide, and, according to the New York State Department of Labor, as of March 2019, there were an estimated 113,800 federal workers within New York State, including about 48,100 federal workers in New York City alone; and

Whereas, The Trump Administration's plan to dismantle the OPM would, among other things, drastically hurt all federal employees, including those in New York City, as the OPM serves as the chief human resources agency and personnel policy manager for the federal government; and set a dangerous precedent for the future restructuring and/or elimination of other vital federal agencies and departments that provide services for millions of Americans, ultimately hurting the nation and its workers as a whole; now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York condemns the Trump Administration for the planned dissolution of the United States Office of Personnel Management.

KK
LS 10714
5/9/19