

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2017

The Honorable Kathleen McGettigan
Acting Director, Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Acting Director McGettigan,

As Co-Chairs of the New Democrat Coalition Cybersecurity Task Force, we understand that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) plays an important role in recruiting and retaining a world-class federal workforce for the American people. Today our country faces unprecedented cybersecurity challenges, yet the federal government struggles to recruit and retain qualified cyber professionals.

We write to inquire about two aspects of the federal cybersecurity hiring and training process.

First, under the 1958 Government Employees Training Act, federal agencies have the authority to provide training, including non-governmental training resources, for employees. Offering industry-recognized certification testing would be a valuable tool for agencies to recruit and retain highly-qualified cyber professionals. Agencies currently do not offer this benefit because there is no explicit authorization for it under 5 U.S. Code § 4109, which outlines allowable expenses for training. Is there anything explicitly preventing the use of these tests? If nothing is preventing their use, what action would best encourage their use?

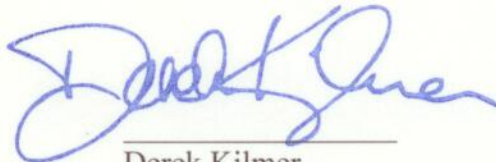
Second, we would like to learn more about the OPM degree requirements for cybersecurity-related jobs. It appears that OPM does not mandate cyber professionals have a four-year degree, but we have been informed that the vast majority of job postings ask for one. Given the increasing need for cybersecurity personnel, OPM should be more flexible with job requirements. For many of these jobs, a two-year degree or other non-traditional education paths, such as industry-recognized certification testing, can sufficiently prepare workers, especially in combination with high-value experience. Accordingly, we encourage OPM to explore ways to adjust the requirements and streamline the hiring process for federal cybersecurity jobs, including looking to the private sector for ideas.

We look forward to your responses and the opportunity to continue working with OPM on these issues.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress