

January 23, 2023

Sent via e-mail

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), which is dedicated to advancing the interests of the more than 5 million federal employees and retirees, as well as their spouses and survivors, I write in favor of the bipartisan Chance to Compete Act of 2023, H.R. 159, and urge you to vote in its favor.

The Chance to Compete Act would change how federal agencies evaluate job applicants and make the federal hiring process more efficient. It would improve the ability of agencies to share assessments, allow subject matter experts to serve as interviewers, move assessments toward focusing on candidates' ability to perform the job rather than self-ratings and college degrees, and improve transparency. Current federal hiring processes are stifling the government's ability to bring in the talent necessary for it to effectively serve the American people. The changes laid out in this bill work toward improving federal hiring.

Competitive hiring practices are central to the concept of merit-based hiring, whereby employees are hired based on their qualifications. The American people deserve having the best working for them, but improvements to hiring practices are necessary to achieve this. Government-wide data from the Office of Personnel Management from recent years have shown that more than half of all competitive examining certificates have been returned without a hire being made, leading agencies to turn to 105 separate hiring authorities for many (or perhaps most) of their hires to meet critical needs.¹ This bill addresses those issues by providing common sense steps to improve competitive hiring practices and increase hiring efficiency.

Federal agencies currently suffer from mission-critical skills gaps. The federal government should waste no time in addressing those gaps by improving hiring processes. Implementing the changes set forth in the Chance to Compete Act will better serve this task, expanding the eligible talent pool and ensuring that those with needed skills are brought into the federal fold in a transparent and efficient manner. Congress has a responsibility to ensure that the federal government can perform for its people, and passing this legislation represents a commitment to that effort.

For these reasons, I ask that you support H.R. 159 and vote in its favor when it is considered by the House of Representatives. Thank you for your consideration of

¹ "Inspired to Serve, The Final Report of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service," March 2020, <https://www.volckeralliance.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Final%20Report%20-%20National%20Commission.pdf>

NARFE's views. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact NARFE Staff Vice President for Policy and Programs John Hatton at jhatton@narfe.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Shackelford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" being more legible than the last name "Shackelford".

William Shackelford
NARFE National President