

## MEMORANDUM

**To: FMA Regional Directors**

**From: Greg Stanford and Katie Maddocks**

**Re: FMA Government Affairs Update for May 2015**

**Date: June 5, 2015**

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a brief narrative and status of ongoing government relations and public affairs activities the FMA government relations department worked on in May 2015 on behalf of FMA members. Please share this information with chapter presidents, legislative action team leaders and others in your region.

### **Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management Hearing**

One of the ways FMA works for its members is by testifying on issues of importance to managers on Capitol Hill. Testifying before Congress is a high honor that positions FMA as an instrumental, trusted resource for decision-makers. It gives FMA a spotlight on many of the Association's legislative priorities and bolsters FMA's credibility and visibility.

On May 20, 2015, FMA National President Patricia Niehaus testified before the United States Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management. This hearing, titled "21st Century Ideas for the 20th Century Federal Civil Service," focused on a wide variety of challenges facing the federal workforce in the areas of recruitment, retention, performance management, termination, and compensation.

President Niehaus presented on a single panel alongside Yvonne Jones, Director, Strategic Issues at the Government Accountability Office, the Honorable Dan Blair, President and CEO of the National Academy of Public Administration, and J. David Cox, National President of the American Federation of Government Employees.

FMA's written testimony addressed pay for performance, hiring challenges, and potential reforms to improve efficiency, as well as long-standing legislative priorities, such as the need for funding managerial training, beginning the one year probationary period at the conclusion of initial training, among others. You can read President Niehaus' full written testimony at [www.fedmanagers.org](http://www.fedmanagers.org).

### **National President's Visit, May 18-22**

While the highlight of President Niehaus' trip was testifying at the committee hearing, as discussed above, the government affairs office arranged variety of meetings on Capitol Hill and with the press for her visit to Washington, DC, in May:

- **Office of Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ)**
  - FMA has been in close contact with Sen. Booker's staff on many issues, including probationary period, supervisory training, and others. Sen. Booker is a member of the subcommittee that held the hearing President Niehaus testified at. We discussed the hearing in depth and ways FMA can work with Sen. Booker going forward.
- **Office of Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA)**
  - Rep. Beyer took over a seat held by retired Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA), a longtime advocate of the federal workforce and lead sponsor of a supervisory training bill in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. We spoke with his staff about Rep. Beyer's interest in introducing similar legislation in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, as well as support for the Wounded Warrior Federal Leave Act and maternity leave for federal employees.
- **Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Staff (Minority)**
  - We spoke with senior staff regarding the prospects for extension of the probationary period, supervisory training, the Wounded Warrior Federal Leave Act, administrative leave, and bills in the House that negatively target feds.
- **Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME)**
  - Sen. Collins is a good friend of FMA, and has been our strongest ally on FECA reform and the Enhanced Security Clearance Act. FMA advocated for reintroducing legislation on these matters.
- **Joe Davidson, Columnist, *The Washington Post***
  - Met with Joe to discuss FMA's perspective on current issues and the congressional hearing President Niehaus testified at. Good meeting to maintain FMA's relationship with this influential newspaper.

### **Congressional Hearing on FECA Reform**

FMA monitored a May 20 hearing the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Workforce Protections held on the Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA). Currently, FECA provides 75 percent of wages for employees with dependents and 66 ⅔ percent for those without. One of FMA's

issue briefs is to reform FECA so that all beneficiaries receive 66 ⅔, regardless of whether or not they have dependents. Additionally, there is no retirement program for those on FECA.

During the hearing, Department of Labor Director of Office of Workers' Compensation Protections Leonard Howie testified on the benefits of providing 70 percent of wages for all of FECA recipients, regardless of dependents, and encouraged them to rely on other retirement savings. This would not just save money for federal departments and agencies, but also encourage FECA employees to return to work.

### **Public Service Recognition Week**

FMA helped celebrate Public Service Recognition Week, May 3-9, which annually honors employees in local, state and federal government across the United States for their work. A bipartisan group of Senators, led by Senators Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and James Lankford (R-OK), introduced a Senate resolution recognizing the wide variety of jobs public workers accomplish.

FMA Executive Director Todd Wells and Membership Coordinator Katie Redmond attended a luncheon where the Partnership for Public Service announced the finalists for the annual Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Awards, known as the "Sammies." Additionally, FMA was an instrumental contributor in organizing and facilitating PSRW's third annual 5K run/walk in Anacostia Park, which welcomed more than 300 participants and raised more than \$30,000 for the Federal Employee Education and Assistance Fund (FEEA).

### **FMA Joins New Space Management Working Group**

FMA recently joined the Space Management Working Group of the National Council on Federal Labor-Management Relations to address disputes over office space, which account for about a tenth of bargaining disputes and that often lead to unfair labor practice charges. FMA will give managers a voice as the working group looks at better understanding current trends and best practices, as well as tools for managers and unions to use to address issues.

### **FMA Supports Lynch Legislation Concerning Prescription Drug Costs**

Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA) introduced legislation calling for better oversight from the Officer of Personnel Management on the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) prescription drug contracting. The bill aims to ensure that FEHBP enrollees receive the greatest cost savings available when purchasing prescription drugs. The FMA government affairs department assisted President Niehaus on a letter in support of Rep. Lynch's bill.

### **Meetings and Communication with Capitol Hill**

Below are a sample of some of the meetings and interactions the FMA government affairs office had in May 2015:

- Ongoing communications on the Department of Defense (DOD) cuts to long term TDY per diems.
- Fundraiser for Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA) a champion for FMA on several issues, including the DOD per diem issue.
- Building support for supervisory training and extension of the probationary period.
- Introductory meetings of who FMA is and our 2015 issue briefs.