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SUBJ: HR DESIGN NEWS CORNER: PROPOSED REGULATIONS PUBLISHED/FAQ  
A. THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENTS NEW HR SYSTEM HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER. THEY ALSO CAN BE ACCESSED ONLINE AT WWW.EPA.GOV/EDOCKET. ALL EMPLOYEES, ALONG WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, NOW HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND SUBMIT FORMAL COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED SYSTEM. THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENTS IS 22 MAR 2004.

THERE ARE TWO METHODS FOR SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. VIA THE INTERNET:

PROPOSED REGULATIONS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE HR DESIGN PROCESS CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.EPA.GOV/EDOCKET. THIS SITE INCLUDES A LINK TO THE PROPOSED DHS REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING PUBLIC COMMENT ELECTRONICALLY.

2. VIA U.S. MAIL:

WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS, REFERENCING DHS/OPM AND DOCKET NUMBER (DHS-2004-001), CAN BE SENT TO:  
DHS/OPM HR SYSTEM PUBLIC COMMENTS  
PO BOX 14474

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20044-4474

3. FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, A FACT SHEET HIGHLIGHTING KEY ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON DHS.GOV. TO ACCESS THIS FACT SHEET, VISIT:

[HTTP://WWW.DHS.GOV/INTERWEB/ASSETLIBRARY/DHS\\_FACT\\_SHEET\\_FINAL.DOC](http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/dhs_fact_sheet_final.doc)

4. OVER THE COURSE OF THE NEXT FEW WEEKS IN THE HR DESIGN NEWS CORNER WE WILL BE DETAILING SPECIFICS OF PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE AREAS OF PAY, CLASSIFICATION, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, LABOR RELATIONS, ADVERSE ACTIONS, AND APPEALS.

5. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT THESE ARE PROPOSED REGULATIONS AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF THE INPUT RECEIVED DURING THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD. IN THE INTERIM, ANY CHANGES MADE TO CURRENT HR POLICIES AND PRACTICES WILL BE MADE UNDER CURRENT REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES UNTIL FINAL REGULATIONS ARE PUBLISHED. FINAL REGULATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO BE PUBLISHED IN 2004, AFTER COMPLETION OF THE REVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND A LEGALLY-MANDATED PERIOD OF CONFERRING WITH EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES.

6. WE ARE COMMITTED TO CONTINUING THE COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT HAS BEEN SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS PROCESS. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO TALK TO YOUR PEERS AND MANAGERS ABOUT THE PROPOSED HR SYSTEM. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS, IDEAS, SOLUTIONS, AND CONCERNS DURING TEAM AND EMPLOYEE MEETINGS. YOUR CONTINUED INPUT ON DEVELOPING A HUMAN RESOURCES SYSTEM THAT MEETS THE DEPARTMENTS MISSION REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONDS TO EMPLOYEE NEEDS IS MUCH APPRECIATED.

B. SEVERAL INQUIRIES RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTION HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.

ANSWER FOLLOWS:

1. QUESTION: THE HOMELAND SECURITY ACT STATED THAT NO CHANGES WILL BE MADE TO EMPLOYEES EMPLOYMENT STATUS, PAY, OR BENEFITS FOR ONE YEAR. 01 MAR 04 MARKS THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEPARTMENT. WHAT HAPPENS THEN?

2. ANSWER: 01 MAR 04 MARKS THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE DHS AND IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE OUR COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENTS. NO CHANGES IN EMPLOYEES EMPLOYMENT STATUS, PAY, OR BENEFITS WILL BE MADE AS A RESULT OF THE ANNIVERSARY. THE TIMING OF THE DEPARTMENTS ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND THE PUBLICATION OF PROPOSED

REGULATIONS FOR OUR NEW HR SYSTEM IS COINCIDENTAL, AND WE WOULD LIKE TO REASSURE EMPLOYEES OF THE FOLLOWING:

A. NO JOBS WILL BE ELIMINATED EITHER AS A RESULT OF THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW HR SYSTEM OR BECAUSE OF THE PASSING OF THE ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY.

B. THERE WILL BE NO REDUCTION IN CURRENT PAY OR BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES EITHER AS A RESULT OF THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW SYSTEM OR BECAUSE OF THE PASSING OF THE ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY.

C. EMPLOYEES WILL CONTINUE TO BE COVERED UNDER CURRENT RULES AND REGULATIONS UNTIL THE NEW HR SYSTEM IS COMPLETED LATER THIS YEAR.

3. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SEND YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS REGARDING THE NEW HR SYSTEM TO HRDESIGN@DHS.GOV. IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR COMMENTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PUBLIC DOCKET FOR THE RULEMAKING, BE SURE TO SUBMIT THEM TO THE ADDRESSES LISTED IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE AND ABOVE. COMMENTS FROM HRDESIGN@DHS.GOV WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY BE SENT TO THE DOCKET.

C. PRIOR TO THE PUBLICATION OF THE PROPOSED RULES IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER, SECRETARY RIDGE MET WITH JOHN GAGE, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (AFGE), COLLEEN KELLEY, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL TREASURY EMPLOYEES UNION (NTEU), AND MIKE RANDALL, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURE EMPLOYEES (NAAE). SECRETARY RIDGE INVITED THEM TO PREPARE A JOINT

STATEMENT TO THEIR MEMBERSHIP ON THE OCCASION OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS. HERE IS THAT MESSAGE:

1. FEBRUARY 17, 2004 MESSAGE FROM AFGE/NTEU/NAAE

"WHILE THERE IS NO AGREEMENT WITH THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR A NEW PERSONNEL SYSTEM, WE ARE COMMITTED TO CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH SECRETARY RIDGE. WE WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE PROCESS. A FORMAL 30-DAY COMMENT PERIOD BEGINS NOW DURING WHICH WE WILL CONTINUE TO ENGAGE WITH THE SECRETARY. FOLLOWING THAT, THERE WILL BE A MORE FORMALIZED PROCESS, WHICH CAN INCLUDE MEDIATION BETWEEN US AND THE DEPARTMENT. SECRETARY RIDGE HAS COMMITTED THAT SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS WILL CONTINUE. WE WILL AGGRESSIVELY REPRESENT YOUR INTERESTS WITH SECRETARY RIDGE. IT IS OUR INTENT TO HAVE A NEW SYSTEM IMPLEMENTED THAT IS GOOD FOR THE MISSION AND IS GOOD FOR THE EMPLOYEES."

2. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED INTEREST IN THE HRMS EFFORT. WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE VALUABLE INPUT AND SUGGESTIONS TO THE FEEDBACK MAILBOX. PLEASE SEND YOUR INSIGHTS TO THE HR DESIGN MAILBOX AT HRDESIGN@DHS.GOV.

3. INTERNET RELEASE AUTHORIZED.

4. RONALD R. KOGUT, CHIEF, OFFICE OF CIVILIAN PERSONNEL SENDS.

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