

**STATEMENT OF**  
**HONORABLE TOM MARINO**  
**MEMBER OF CONGRESS**  
**10<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**BEFORE THE**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT**  
**REFORM**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE, U.S. POSTAL**  
**SERVICE AND LABOR POLICY**

**ENTITLED**  
**“RIGHTSIZING THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE”**  
**PRESENTED**  
**MAY 26, 2011**

Chairman Ross, Ranking Member Lynch, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this hearing today and giving me the opportunity to testify.

Our nation is over \$14.3 trillion dollars in debt, a record-high and the equivalent of approximately \$46,000 owed by every child born today.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that in 2011 we will have a federal budget deficit of over \$1.6 trillion dollars; 2011 will represent the third straight year in which revenues to the federal government have fallen below spending by over one trillion dollars.<sup>2</sup> We are borrowing about 42 cents for every dollar we spend.

The current fiscal course we are on is unsustainable and disastrous.

The American people have sent a clear message to Washington. We must cut spending; reduce the size and scope of the government; and keep taxes low to grow the economy and create jobs.

I introduced H.R. 1779, the Federal Hiring Freeze Act of 2011 because the time for talk has ended, and the time for action is now. We cannot continue down this road of big government and deficit spending.

The general framework for my legislation and the concept that we must put a freeze on federal spending is not a new idea. President Ronald Reagan's first official act upon being sworn in as our nation's 40<sup>th</sup> President on January 20, 1981 was signing a Presidential Memorandum calling for an immediate freeze on the hiring of civilian employees in the executive branch.<sup>3</sup> In a statement at the signing of the memorandum, he stated that the freeze was a "first step toward

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<sup>1</sup> Information available at <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/>.

<sup>2</sup> Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2012, Office of Management and Budget, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>.

<sup>3</sup> Wallace Jr., Paul S., Congressional Research Service, *Background on the President's Memorandum Regarding Federal Civilian Hiring Freeze*, March 20, 1981. Available upon request.

controlling the growth and the size of Government and reducing the drain on the economy for the public sector.”<sup>4</sup>

My legislation builds on the Reagan plan by imposing a hiring freeze on the federal government until the budget deficit has been eliminated. The bill contains specific limited exceptions in which hiring is permitted, such as:

- times when our nation is at war;
- vital national security interests;
- federal law enforcement purposes;
- to honor prior contractual obligations;
- reassignment of personnel within agencies to fill needed positions;
- positions to facilitate the orderly transition and operation of a new Presidential administration; and
- the U.S. Postal Service.

These common sense exceptions assure that the most critical and basic functions of our federal government remain unaffected by the freeze.

The fact is, we need to manage the government more like we run our businesses. I am perplexed that people are opposed to this idea. I recently was informed that we do not need to operate the government like a business because the government can print money at any time. This argument does not resonate with me, or my constituents in the 10<sup>th</sup> District of Pennsylvania.

I worked in a factory until I was 30 years old. I worked my way up into mid-level management. When the revenues weren't coming in, we cut our costs. One of the ways we cut our costs was by not replacing people when they left and asking the remaining employees to produce a little more; and they did. This approach is what we need to do in Washington with federal employees.

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<sup>4</sup> John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project [online]. Santa Barbara, CA. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=43490>.

My legislation is in no way an attack on federal employees or the work that they do. I have the utmost respect for the federal workforce; as a United States Attorney I had some of the best and brightest young attorneys working for me. This why I know that federal workers are willing and able to step up to be a part of the solution to our nation's problems.

According to the Congressional Research Service, the total cost of the federal workforce in 2010 was \$590 billion dollars.<sup>5</sup> This accounted for nearly 30 percent of total federal receipts for that year. We cannot and should not allow the costs of the federal workforce to grow while millions of Americans are struggling. This legislation calls on the federal workforce to take a prominent role in the process of leading the country out of our current fiscal crisis.

Obviously, a hiring freeze is not a silver bullet that will unilaterally lead us out of this crisis. But it is start. It is in combination with other efforts that we have started to enact, for example the step that we took in slashing our own office budgets by 5 percent.<sup>6</sup> Just because this legislation is not the cure-all for the nation's ills, does not mean that we cannot begin deliberately addressing an issue that is important to many Americans.

This bill would be a small, but significant step towards reducing the size of government and addressing the out of control government spending. The time for action is now.

Once again I would like to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for giving me the opportunity to provide my thoughts on this important issue. I stand ready and willing to work with the Committee and my colleague from Wyoming. Thank you.

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<sup>5</sup> Curtis W. Copeland., *The Federal Workforce: Characteristics and Trends*, Congressional Research Service, April 19, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> H.Res. 22, *Reducing the amount authorized for salaries and expenses of Member, committee, and leadership offices in 2011 and 2012*, Rep. Greg Walden. Passed the House of Representatives January 6, 2011.