

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

September 8, 2015

The Honorable Jeh C. Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On April 16, 2015, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Chief Human Capital Officer Catherine Emerson testified before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's Subcommittee on Government Operations at a hearing titled "The Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government."

During that hearing, Subcommittee Chairman Mark Meadows asked Ms. Emerson and the other witnesses to provide "a score, a quantitative number, in terms of where we are today and where you would like to be a year from now,"¹ in reference to the "Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey" and the Partnership for Public Service's "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" survey. Chairman Meadows also asked Ms. Emerson to provide performance data for certain poorly performing agencies within your Department.²

Chairman Meadows memorialized this request in a letter to Ms. Emerson on April 30, 2015. The letter asked that Ms. Emerson provide the Committee with the benchmarks requested during the hearing, by agency component, no later than May 15, 2015.³ The Department did not respond until nearly three months after the May due date on Friday, August 14, 2015 and further failed to address the Committee's request. Instead of submitting the requested information, the Department sent a copy of the Homeland Security Advisory Council's May 2015 "Report of the DHS Employee Task Force"⁴ and a nine slide PowerPoint presentation titled "DHS Employee Engagement Program."⁵ Neither document included the benchmark information requested by the Committee nor did the Department provide a letter addressing the missing information. The

¹ H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, *Hearing on The Worst Places to Work in the Federal Government* 114th Cong. (April 16, 2015)(statement of Hon. Mark Meadows, Chairman, Subcomm. on Gov't Operations).

² *Id.*

³ Letter from Hon. Mark Meadows, Chairman, Subcomm. on Gov't Operations, to Catherine V. Emerson, Chief Human Capital Officer, U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec. (April 30, 2015).

⁴ *Report of the DHS Employee Task Force*, Dept' of Homeland Sec., Homeland Sec. Advisory Council (May 21, 2015).

⁵ *DHS Employee Engagement Program*, Dep't of Homeland Sec. (transmitted via email from the Department of Homeland Security to Committee staff on May 21, 2015).

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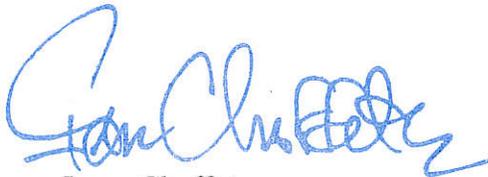
absence of metrics makes it impossible to measure the Department's work to improve employee engagement.

We appreciated your efforts to meet with Members of this Committee prior to the April 16 hearing. At the time, we found your desire to invest in employee engagement and improve morale encouraging. It is disappointing that, after over four months, the Department has not provided the information requested by the Committee. This failure raises questions about the sincerity of the Department's commitment to improvement in this area.

Please provide the requested metrics immediately. As detailed in the Committee's April 30, 2015 letter, the metrics should include the benchmarks the Department hopes to achieve for improving its scores in employee engagement at the component level in the "Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey" and/or "The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" survey.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. Pursuant to House Rule X, the Committee has authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time." If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Christopher D'Angelo of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5074.

Sincerely,



Jason Chaffetz
Chairman



Mark Meadows
Chairman
Subcommittee on
Government Operations

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Harold Rogers, Chairman
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations