

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 5, 2008

The Honorable David M. Walker  
Comptroller General  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G St., NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

We are writing to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct a study of political appointees who have sought and been converted to a career position in the executive branch.

In the past, GAO has undertaken similar reviews of conversions, both during the last year of a presidential term and during other years. As we approach the end of the current administration, we believe this is an appropriate time to conduct another such review. As GAO has previously explained, conversions between political and career positions must be carefully monitored because they “can raise questions as to whether the individuals received political favoritism or an unfair advantage in the merit system selection process, even the appearance of which could adversely compromise the integrity of the system.”<sup>1</sup>

We request that GAO: (1) identify the number and types of conversions of political appointees to career position, including the titles, grades, and salaries of the political and career positions from May 2005, the date of the last GAO review on this issue, through May 2009; (2) determine whether federal departments and agencies used appropriate appointment authorities and followed proper procedures consistent with merit systems principles; and (3) determine whether there was any appearance of favoritism or political preference, even if proper procedures were followed.

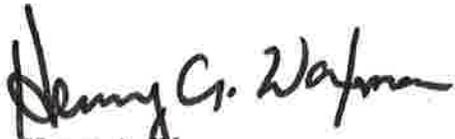
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<sup>1</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, *Personnel Practices: Career and Other Appointments of Former Political Appointees, October 1998 – April 2001* (Feb. 2002) (GAO-02-326) p. 2.

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We look forward to working with GAO on this study. If you have any questions about this request, please call Mark Stephenson on the staff of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform at (202) 225-5051, Tania Shand on the staff of the House Subcommittee on the Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia at (202) 225-5147, or Lisa Powell on the staff of the Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia at (202) 224-4551.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman  
Chairman  
House Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform



Daniel K. Akaka  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Federal  
Government Management, the  
Federal Workforce, and the District  
of Columbia, Senate Committee on  
Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs



Danny K. Davis  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Federal  
Workforce, Postal Service,  
and the District of Columbia,  
House Committee on  
Oversight and Government  
Reform