July 29, 2026

Maura Leary, Associate Counsel
U.S. Office of Government Ethics

Re: RIN 3209–AA76, Exempting Certain Career Federal Employees From Ethics Reporting Requirements

I appreciate the invitation noted in the Federal Register (Vol. 91, No. 140, Thursday, July 23, 2026, pages 46239-46243) to provide public comments on Exempting Certain Career Federal Employees From Ethics Reporting Requirements.

Comment 1 – Background and Proposal

I wish to register my objection to the noted exemption from the public financial disclosure reports. I find it quite disappointing that the Office of Government Ethics is proposing such an exemption mere weeks after President Donald J. Trump issued Executive Order 14410, "Implementing Schedule Policy/Career in the Excepted Service". Was the following expressed Purpose of that Executive Order missed by the Office of Government Ethics:

> "Purpose. The President relies on subordinates in the executive branch to help him faithfully execute the laws and advance the priorities for which he was elected by the American people. Officials in confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, and policy-advocating roles (policy-influencing positions) play particularly important roles in helping him fulfill this constitutional duty. Therefore, ensuring that such employees can be removed for misconduct or poor performance is essential to protecting democratic self-government by an elected President."

Given that expressed Purpose, how does the Office of Government Ethics not think that public financial disclosure reports by all such individuals won't contribute to the ensuring that the President can rely of such "… subordinates in the executive branch to help him faithfully execute the laws and advance the priorities for which he was elected by the American people."

As well given the time interval between Executive Order 14171, "Restoring Accountability to Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce" (January 20, 2025), and Executive Order 14410 (June 3, 2026), did it not occur to the Office of Government Ethics to bring forth the issue of public financial disclosure reporting by the impacted personnel so that such could be potentially clearly addressed in 14410?

Comment 2 – Regulatory Analysis

Given the countless billions of dollars of federal spending that these “Schedule Policy/Career” personnel impact, I find it very surprising that a “approximately $14.6 million” up front and “approximate $1.0 million in additional annual savings” is considered a good justification! Instead, consider if the required public financial disclosure reports allows for the timely identification of poor performance or misconduct by just one individual, the savings from their removal from making adverse “policy-determining, policy-making, and policy-advocating” determinations could easily pay for such costs.

Did I miss some aspect of Executive Order 14410 that required that it only be executed if there was no additional cost in doing so? I specifically note that 14410 calls for “executive departments and agencies (agencies) to appropriately recognize and reward Schedule Policy/Career employees for outstanding work”. So is it not logical to assume that there would also be an associated cost from addressing requirements such as public financial disclosure reports.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to provide my public comments on an Office of Government Ethics proposed action that I hope will soon be reversed and impacted “Schedule Policy/Career” personnel advised of the need to submit public financial disclosure reports in a timely manner. Such would greatly assure that “… subordinates in the executive branch to help him faithfully execute the laws and advance the priorities for which he was elected by the American people.”

Sincerely,

Mr. Donivan Porterfield
Los Alamos, NM