



# Merit Systems Protection Board

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## **AGENCIES OPERATING OUTSIDE TRADITIONAL CIVIL SERVICE LAW PROVIDED INSIGHTS ON THE MANY WAYS TO PRACTICE MERIT**

Today, the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) released its latest report titled, “The Practice of Merit: A Symposium.”

Chairman Neil A. G. McPhie said, “The Board, as the guardian of merit, is committed to providing relevant information that will assist agencies in managing their workforce in accord with the merit system principles.” In support of this goal, the Board convened a one-day conference on April 20, 2006 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, to highlight how agencies operating outside the traditional civil service system practice merit when managing their workforce.

In the last decade, a number of agencies have been granted exemptions from all or certain provisions of Title 5, the law that governs the Federal civil service. The most recent major exemptions were granted to the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security. “I believe that there is a need for contemporary and flexible personnel systems,” said Chairman McPhie when he welcomed participants to the conference. He noted, however, that these agencies must still conform to the enduring values of fairness and effectiveness embodied in the merit principles. Chairman McPhie said, “The core values of the Federal system, which are the essence of the merit system principles, must be preserved. Fairness, openness, and transparency need to be apparent in whatever we do, whether we are in or out of Title 5. It is simply good business to do so.”

In its continuing effort of providing practical information to Federal agencies, the MSPB has published the symposium’s proceedings. Agencies searching for ways to

improve the effectiveness of their workforce can find practical examples in the report for possible implementation.

The MSPB is an independent, quasi-judicial agency with responsibility for deciding Federal employee appeals from personnel actions taken against them, protecting the integrity of the civil service and other Federal merit systems, and conducting studies of the civil service and other merit systems in the Executive Branch. To request a printed copy of the report, e-mail [STUDIES@mspb.gov](mailto:STUDIES@mspb.gov); call (202) 653-6772, extension 1350; or write: Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Policy and Evaluation, 1615 M Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20419. The report may be downloaded from the Board's website at [www.mspb.gov](http://www.mspb.gov).

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