



Merit Systems Protection Board

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NEW MSPB REPORT GAUGES THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PROGRESS TOWARDS A FAIR AND REPRESENTATIVE WORKPLACE

In a newly released report, "Fair and Equitable Treatment: Progress Made and Challenges Remaining," the MSPB examines the Federal Government's progress toward achieving a representative workforce and treating all employees fairly. The assessment is based on an analysis of statistical data and Federal employee perceptions of their experiences and treatment in the workplace.

The MSPB found that progress has been made. First, the Federal workforce has become more diverse, in keeping with the Federal Government's commitment to recruit and retain a workforce from all segments of American society. Second, an increasing percentage of Federal employees perceive that they are treated fairly, and a decreasing percentage believe that they have experienced discrimination on factors such as ethnicity/race, gender, and age.

Nevertheless, challenges remain. For example, the percentage of minorities at higher levels of pay and responsibility (such as General Schedule grades GS-14 and GS-15 and the Senior Executive Service) remains below their rate of employment at lower levels. In addition, many employees believe that personnel decisions are often based on factors other than merit, such as favoritism.

As Chairman Grundmann stated, "Fairness—and an engaged, high-performing workforce—require more than the absence of discrimination and prohibited

personnel practices. It is essential for agencies to ensure that their HR policies and practices do not create barriers to merit-based selection, advancement, recognition, and retention. We also remind agencies that safeguards and employee protections are a critical component of decentralized, flexible HR systems.”

MSPB research also confirmed the importance of employee actions to achieving a representative, high-performing workforce. Data from an MSPB survey on career advancement shows that applicants and employees can do much to improve their prospects for success on the job and for promotion. Federal employees reported that challenging work assignments, a good working relationship with a supportive supervisor, and formal education and on-the-job development could pay substantial dividends. Accordingly, the report includes recommendations for Federal employees who seek advancement within the Federal service.

The Merit Systems Protection Board is an independent, quasi-judicial agency that protects Federal merit systems and the rights of individuals within those systems. The MSPB Office of Policy and Evaluation conducts studies of the Federal workforce and makes recommendations for its improved efficiency and effectiveness. To request a printed copy of the reports, e-mail 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 reports may also be downloaded from the MSPB's website at www.mspb.gov.

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