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Contact Information:
Jason Briefel
jason.briefel@seniorexecs.org

SEA Statement on Proposed Updates to Federal Senior Executive Performance Management

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Marcus Hill, President of the Senior Executives Association (SEA)—representing the interests of over 8,000 career federal executives in the Senior Executive Service (SES), Senior Level (SL), Scientific and Professional (ST) and equivalent positions and other senior career federal leaders, - released the following statement in response to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) [announcement](#) of a [proposed rule](#) ([fact sheet](#)) on executive performance management and forced distribution of performance ratings:

“As SEA said has stated in the past, including in comments on the prior proposed Schedule F rule, ‘SEA shares the Trump Administration’s view that federal performance management and accountability systems must be strengthened.’ Indeed, the association has advocated for more rigorous performance and talent management practices in government for years.”

“Career senior executives understand their role in the federal government and the importance of performance management and accountability. The proposed changes from OPM indicate that agency officials would have to interpret the meaning of “faithful administration of the President’s policies.” SEA believes the appropriate manner to apply this phrase for SES would be to assess the quality of objective advice prior to policy development, and effective implementation of all lawful policy decisions. However, if the phrase is interpreted differently and a member of the SES wishes to appeal, the rule would also remove appeal rights to allow a third-party review of the government’s actions to ensure they are fair and justified.”

“In its rule, OPM also proposes to remove provisions of law which prevent the arbitrary distribution of performance ratings that are key provisions of a statutory pay for performance scheme designed by Congress governing the Senior Executive Service. The rule would instead change policy to force the distribution of performance ratings, rather than empowering political appointees with the tools to manage their agencies’ performance and consistently achieve desirable results that sustain a high performing organizational culture.

“SEA appreciates OPM’s solicitation of public comments on multiple open questions regarding ways to improve performance management. SEA would welcome the opportunity to work with OPM or other Administration officials about how best to invest in senior executive continuous learning and growth.”

“In addition, federal executive performance management data has not been released by OPM since FY 2015, which covers three presidential administrations. SEA’s request for this information, including through FOIA, has thus far resulted in only the release of top line FY 2023 SES performance award data -- no comprehensive historical data has been released to support the record that led to this proposed rule. SEA continues to recommend the release of pertinent data which contributes to effective policymaking.”

“SEA is reviewing OPM’s proposed rule for comment and action.”

Background:

- [SEA Statement on Presidential Proposal Affecting Career Federal Workforce, April 2025.docx](#)
- [SES Joint Policy Agenda](#)
- [SEA Policy Agenda, 119th Congress.pdf](#)

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The Senior Executives Association (SEA) is a professional association representing Senior Executive Service members and other career Federal leaders. Founded in 1980, SEA’s goals are to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity of the Federal government; to advance the professionalism and advocate the interests of career Federal executives; and to enhance public recognition of their contributions.

For more information, visit www.seniorexecs.org.