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Federal Executives Concerned by OPM Rule on Performance Rating Quotas

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Marcus Hill, President of the Senior Executives Association (SEA) –representing the interests of over 10,000 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 a final rule by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on executive performance management and directing agencies to impose performance rating quotas:

“Federal executive performance management does need an overhaul, as our association has advocated for improvements to fairness and transparency over the past four decades. Yet the Senior Executives Association strongly believe that OPM’s new rule requiring the forced distribution of executive performance ratings will result in a host of new challenges. There is minimal evidence in leadership or business literature that forced distribution of ratings is an effective or sustainable performance management practice; rather, such systems have been found to foster a lack of trust. Ultimately, this leads to executives competing amongst themselves for favor from leaders, versus focusing on demonstrating performance that exceeds expectations. By the very nature of their selection and advancement, senior executives represent the top tier of leadership talent, and any system that presumes otherwise in lieu of rating actual performance of SES leaders risks undermining both trust and effectiveness.”

“Again, SEA supports OPM’s efforts to reform executive performance management. SEA encourages OPM to pursue this change by including representatives from professional associations such as SEA and others who are knowledgeable, experienced and can contribute to better, sustainable improvements. SEA believes that working in tandem, there is an opportunity to launch a professional, bipartisan initiative to yield the quality results expected by those operating within the performance management system and the American People, who benefit from the impact of their performance on their agencies’ services.”

Background:

- [SEA comments on OPM proposed rule Upholding Civil Service Protections and Merit System Principles RIN 3206-AO56 Docket No 2023-19806](#)

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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.

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