



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Friday, February 1, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: Other Stakeholders

FROM: John Berry, Director

Subject: Moratorium on the Acceptance and Processing of New Senior Executive Service (SES) Qualifications Review Board Cases during Agency Head Transitions

In accordance with its authority under 5 CFR 317.502(d), and consistent with past practice, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has decided to stop accepting and processing new agency SES Qualifications Review Board (QRB) cases effective when an agency head departs or announces his or her departure. OPM will also impose a QRB moratorium effective on the date that the President announces the nomination of a new agency head. These steps are being taken in order to ensure that any incoming agency head will have the opportunity to exercise his or her prerogative to make or approve executive resources decisions that will impact the agency's performance during his or her tenure. Please note that this action will affect only new cases; QRB cases submitted to OPM prior to an announcement, departure, or nomination will continue to be processed. In addition, agencies may still process non-competitive SES selections in accordance with applicable regulations.

While a QRB moratorium is intended to preserve the prerogatives of an incoming agency head, that interest must be balanced against the need to ensure the continuity of agency operations during periods of transition. Accordingly, I will consider requests for exceptions to the QRB moratorium on a case-by-case basis. Requests for exceptions should be signed by the agency head or the official who is designated to act in the agency head's absence. Such requests must specifically address the potential for adverse impact on national security, homeland security, or a critical agency mission, program, or function that will result if a particular SES candidate is not certified immediately.

Agencies may, if they wish, continue to conduct SES merit staffing actions in the absence of an agency head or designated official, up to the point of submission of the candidate selected to the QRB for certification. OPM will suspend its usual practice of imposing a 90-day time limit for submitting agency selections of new SES candidates to the QRB, which will enable agencies to hold such selections until such time as a new agency head is appointed and certifies the selections.

Please address any questions to Laura Lynch, Manager, Senior Executive Resources Services, by email at Laura.Lynch@opm.gov or by telephone at 202-606-2773.

cc: Human Resources Directors