



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

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**MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies**

FROM: Kay Coles James, Director

Subject: Public Service Talking Points

As you prepare for upcoming graduation commencement speeches and other public events, I am taking this opportunity to share **Talking Points Relating to Service in the U.S. Government** that I ask you to consider including in your remarks.

These public events are opportunities to celebrate how Federal Government services improve life for all of us. As you review these talking points, I am sure they will serve as a reminder of how important the efforts of public servants are in ensuring freedom and the ability of all Americans to pursue the best life possible.

I am sure you share my enthusiasm for the opportunity to thank our Federal employees for the work they do and to spread the word about the value of a career in public service.

## Talking Points

### **Working For America Talking Points**

Comments Prepared by Office of Personnel Management  
Kay Coles James, Director

#### **Purpose of the Document**

The enclosed talking points are intended to assist individuals and organizations as they promote public service.

#### **President of the United States on Public Service**

- In his state of the Union Speech, President Bush called on every American to commit at least two years to the service of our neighbors and our nation. President Bush stated,

*"None of us would ever wish the evil that was done on September the 11th. Yet after America was attacked, it was as if our entire country looked into a mirror and saw our better selves. We were reminded that we are citizens, with obligations to each other, to our country, and to history. We began to think less of the goods we can accumulate, and more about the good we can do."*

"For too long our culture has said, 'If it feels good, do it.' Now America is embracing a new ethic and a new creed: 'Let's roll.' In the sacrifice of soldiers, the fierce brotherhood of firefighters, and the bravery and generosity of ordinary citizens, we have glimpsed what a new culture of responsibility could look like. We want to be a nation that serves goals larger than self. We've been offered a unique opportunity, and we must not let this moment pass."

- President Bush has reiterated the thoughts of the respected educator, scientist, teacher, and agriculturist George Washington Carver who stated decades ago, "It is not the style of clothes one wears, neither the kind of automobile one drives, nor the amount of money one has in the bank, that counts. These mean nothing. It is simply service that measures success."

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#### **Points on Public Service**

- In recent years, trust in our public institutions has eroded. Since September 11, however, our nation has once again discovered heroes - and many of those heroes are public servants.
- America's Federal employees have risen to the occasion and shown the world that they do indeed have "the right stuff." In part as a result of the professionalism, dedication and courage public servants have displayed during the attacks and in their aftermath, trust in has soared to the highest levels since the mid-1960s.

- "Every post is honorable in which a man can serve his country." That statement was written by George Washington in 1775, but it still applies today. While much of the renewed attention to public service is being placed on those areas which are directly fighting the war on terrorism - like the CIA, FBI and Justice Department - each agency has a role in ensuring that our nation is protected and that it prospers.

## **Federal Government Employment**

Within five years, up to 50 percent of the Federal workforce will be eligible for retirement. Some call this a crisis. We see it as an opportunity.

An opportunity to streamline Government hiring processes to make it easier and faster for talented individuals to join the Federal workforce.

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- An opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to veterans' preference. The brave men and women who serve our nation in time of war know what it means to be a public servant and we should give veterans their due credit when they apply for civilian service positions. It was President Franklin Roosevelt who stated, "I believe that the Federal Government, functioning in its capacity as an employer, should take the lead in assuring those who are in the armed forces that, when they return, special consideration will be given to them in their efforts to get employment." That sentiment endures to this day and now extends to young women as well.
- An opportunity to inspire a new generation to public service. This month, as graduating college seniors wonder how they can make their mark, we need to put out a call to consider serving their nation. America needs individuals with skills in management, information technology, human resources, languages, accounting, medical research, mathematics, and yes, even rocket science. In other words, public service is working for America.
- Last year (FY2001) nearly 35,000 college graduates used their degree to serve their nation in the Federal Government. That includes:
  - 22,301 graduates with a bachelors degree
  - 8,294 masters degree graduates
  - 1,849 doctoral graduates

An additional 10,115 college graduates went into the Armed Services

- Through public service you can:
  - Serve the Nation and your community, and
  - Perform challenging, interesting and rewarding work.
- Today, there is an unprecedented opportunity to join the call to public service.
  - We have the smallest Federal workforce since the 1960s.
  - Nearly 400,000 employees can retire in the next 4 years.
  - Agency requirements for many occupations, especially in light of September 11, are high.

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Federal jobs are interesting and important. Civil servants:

- Protect our borders,
- Keep our air, water and land clean,
- Provide medical services and ensure drug safety,
- Conduct vital research on cancer, and heart disease,
- Lead us into the ever expanding horizon of space,
- Manage our National parks, historic buildings and museums, including the Smithsonian Institute,
- Insure the safety of our food, and
- Manage loan programs for students and home purchasers, among others.

The Federal Government is looking for applicants with:

- Keen intellect,
- Analytical skills,
- Effective competencies, and
- Strong character.

In return, the promises:

- Responsibility,
- Growth,
- Challenge,
- Good pay,
- Great benefits, including health, life and long term care insurance, and
- Flexible hours, and
- An opportunity to serve your country.

To obtain information about Federal jobs visit [usajobs.opm.gov](http://usajobs.opm.gov).

## Personal Examples

One doesn't have to look long to find extraordinary contributions from ordinary individuals who have answered the call for public service. Most of these stories will never be known. Following are just a few examples:

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- **Neil Armstrong - the NASA team**

Placing a man on the moon in 1969 was a monumental achievement and a source of national pride. Perhaps equally beneficial was that the Apollo program gave school children heroes that they could seek to emulate. Today, teachers can still point to the space program as an example for their students of why learning math and science matters.

NASA employees are truly some of our best and our brightest - and they are public employees.

- **163,000 Peace Corps Volunteers**

Since 1961, more than 163,000 volunteers have served in the Peace Corps in 130 countries.

President Bush recently commented on the value of these committed public servants when he stated, "Peace Corps is a way for Americans to help teach the world about the universal values that we hold dear, the true nature of America, which sometimes is distorted around the world. People don't have the true picture of our country. And one way to make sure they do is to have compassionate citizens go into communities all around the world to teach -- to teach all kinds of things. But the most important lesson they teach is that we're a loving country that we care deeply about the citizens of the world."

- **Richard Carmona - Nominee for Surgeon General**

[Carmona was] a high school dropout who became a Green Beret, an Army medic, and the recipient of two Purple Hearts. He returned to school on the GI Bill to earn bachelors and master's degrees, in addition to his medical degree. Mr. Carmona has worked as a trauma surgeon, trained as a cop and led a SWAT team, where his heroics included dangling from a helicopter during a rescue. (Dallas Morning News, 4/03/02)

That's not bad for work!

## **U.S. Office of Personnel Management**

- **Mike Powers - OPM Contractor**

Mike Powers was working as a contract employee at the Office of Personnel Management in D.C. on September 11, when he learned that an airplane had hit the Pentagon. As a trained EMT, Mike gathered his trauma gear and headed to the Pentagon to see how he could help.

At the Pentagon, Mike treated burn victims and even manned the hose line into the darkened corridors.

On September 11, Mike was just one of hundreds of rescue workers - some professional, some volunteer - who answered the noble calling to public service. But he made a difference.

- **The Civil Service Aircraft Maintenance Team**

The Civil Service Aircraft Maintenance Team at Laughlin Air Force Base near Del Rio, Texas, is a championship model of what civil service support can contribute to national defense. Between 1996 and 2001, the team saved the Air Force an estimated \$126.8 million in payroll by performing its services with 47 percent fewer employees than a conventional military manpower model calculates for similar mission needs. They serve the largest, most active pilot training air fleet (47th Flying Training Wing) that annually executes more than 70,000 sorties, and were selected under A-76 bidding procedures. Since its inception, the program has generated 554,109 flying hours free of mishaps attributable to aircraft maintenance.

- **Linda Belton - Veterans Administration**

Ms. Belton leads the veterans healthcare system in the upper Midwest. The system has increased the number of community-based outpatient clinics from 5 to 21 that provided significantly improved access care to 1.5 million veterans in the network service area.

As a result of Ms. Belton's efforts, our nation's veterans have improved geographic access to primary care (over 85 percent of the network veterans have access to care within 30 miles of their residences); significantly reduced clinical appointment waiting times; and they have been provided with round-the-clock availability of telephone triage, allowing them to call toll-free for counseling, crisis intervention, home treatment, medication counseling, and symptom assessment.

- **Ronald J. Bettauer - State Department**

As Deputy Legal Advisor, Mr. Bettauer's effective litigation strategies, sound judgment, and leadership skills have resolved numerous highly visible, international disputes.

He successfully defended against more than \$40 billion in claims pending at the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal; negotiated the \$208 million settlement of claims for the U.S. Government and U.S. Nationals against Vietnam and Cambodia; managed the contentious, historic negotiations regarding reparations for over one million survivors of slave and forced labor camps and other atrocities of the Nazi era; and led talks between Ethiopia and Eritrea on issues including boundaries and claims, resulting in a final peace accord.

- **Yvonne T. Maddox - National Institutes for Health**

As Deputy Director of National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Dr. Maddox provides leadership to a large and diverse program that supports research on maternal and child health, the population sciences, and medical rehabilitation. Through her vision and effective management of resources, major advances in the health of mothers and children have been realized.

This is exemplified by a reduction in infant mortality through decreased incidence of respiratory distress syndrome by use of prenatal steroid treatment, and through a 50 percent decline in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) from the successful Back-to Sleep campaign.

In her dual role as Acting Deputy Director, NIH, Dr. Maddox has demonstrated highly effective leadership and managerial skills on numerous NIH and Department-wide activities. She has played a key role in Presidential and Departmental initiatives related to preventing teen pregnancy and eliminating race and health disparities.

- **Joseph A. Levitt - Food and Drug Administration**

Mr. Levitt assumed leadership of the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition at a time when FDA was facing its most complex food safety challenges. Over the last century, the nature of food and foodborne illnesses has changed dramatically. Today, there are more than five times

the number of foodborne pathogens than 50 years ago, many of which are more deadly for those most at risk.

Under Mr. Levitt's leadership, the Center has developed and implemented a comprehensive program to improve early warning systems to detect food borne illnesses; increase the number of food establishment inspections; enhance research into food borne pathogens; develop better methods of risk assessment; and strengthen public education.

- **Robert Anderson - Commerce Department**

Mr. Anderson is recognized for leading the transformation of Trademark Operations from an organization mired in labor-intensive, paper-based processes to one that effectively leverages 21st century technologies to benefit its customers and employees.

He recognized the potential for using technology to improve and update Government services in a manner consistent with ongoing changes in the external business world. His efforts resulted in a vastly improved process for federally registering trademarks, thereby enhancing U.S. commerce and the economy by encouraging investment and productivity in the U.S. marketplace.

- **Richard Hopf - Department of Energy**

As Deputy Assistant Secretary, Mr. Hopf is recognized for:

- Reducing the Department's procurement cycle time by up to 70 percent; increasing worker productivity by 600 percent;
- reducing expenditures for contract support services by over \$400 million; saving over \$65 million through consortium purchasing;
- saving tens of millions of dollars a year by empowering customers to directly buy through purchase cards;
- returning over \$5 million to customers by converting contract closeouts services into a formal business line;
- saving over \$70 million a year in reduced contractor health and benefit costs;
- increasing customer and employee satisfaction ratings while at the same time reducing the number of purchasing personnel from 20-50 percent; and increasing small business contracting by \$1 billion.

Richard Hopf is an example of a public employee with one goal - performance.

For more information about the Federal Workforce please call (202) 606-2402.