



January 11, 2017

Re: The Promote Accountability and Government Efficiency (PAGE) Act

Dear Representative,

I understand that Rep. Todd Rokita (R-IN) is seeking co-sponsors for his so-called Promote Accountability and Government Efficiency (PAGE) Act. The PAGE Act would allow for the type of patronage and politically-motivated employment practices that undermine the professional integrity of federal employees, thereby doing exactly opposite of what the bill title promises. On behalf of the 22 national and international unions in the Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO (DPE), I ask that you not cosponsor the PAGE Act and instead oppose the bill and any provisions from the bill that may be used as amendments to other legislation.

The PAGE Act's provisions would make federal employees beholden to politicians and their agency bosses, not the American people. The bill would eliminate civil service protections for new federal employees, throwing out a decades-old safeguard that ensures federal employees carry out their work in the public's best interest. The bill would also enable agency bosses to impose immediate economic harm on federal employees through suspensions without pay, a coercive tool that can be used by rogue supervisors who want to stop subordinates from blowing the whistle on fraud, waste, and abuse within the federal bureaucracy. The PAGE Act would also curtail employees' appeal rights, encouraging coercive, self-serving management, while at the same time making it harder for falsely accused employees to clear their name.

DPE is also concerned that the PAGE Act would eliminate the use of official time for representational duties. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 permits management and labor to bargain official time arrangements to the mutual benefit of both sides. In federal agencies where management and labor have exercised this right, union representatives use official time to meet statutory representational requirements; advocate on behalf of colleagues for improved workplace conditions; protect the due process rights of individuals from capricious and arbitrary discipline; and make sure federal employees can communicate unfiltered concerns, information, and observations to Congressional committees in an effort to aid the committees' oversight of Executive Branch activities. Union representatives do not use official time for union business or political activities, because current law already prohibits such actions. In addition, unions representing federal employees are legally bound to represent non-dues paying bargaining unit members at no additional cost to these employees.

The federal government employs nearly 1.9 million professionals – from accountants to nurses, engineers to scientists – all who are entrusted with carrying out their work for the benefit of Americans. If these women and men are going to succeed in doing so, it is vital that Congress ensures federal employees are allowed to work in an environment free of undue political

influence. The PAGE Act would dismantle the very protections that guard against such partisan meddling. I respectfully ask that you oppose the bill.

With thanks for your time and consideration –

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul E. Almeida".

Paul E. Almeida
President