

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

REFORMING THE FEDERAL HIRING PROCESS AND PROMOTING PUBLIC
SERVICE TO AMERICA'S YOUTH

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PARTICIPANTS:

Welcome and Introduction:

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Ezra K. Zilkha Chair and Senior Fellow
The Brookings Institution

Opening Remarks:

JOHN BERRY
Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

PANEL DISCUSSION I: FORWARD-LOOKING IDEAS:

Moderator:

WILLIAM GALSTON
Ezra K. Zilkha Chair and Senior Fellow
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Panelists:

ELAINE C. KAMARCK
Lecturer in Public Policy
Harvard Kennedy School

MAX STIER
President and Chief Executive Officer
Partnership for Public Service

DAVE UEIJO
Special Assistant to the Director, NIH Office
of Human Resources
President, Young Government Leaders

PANEL DISCUSSION II: WORKING TOWARD REFORM:

Moderator:

ALAN P. BALUTIS
Director and Distinguished Fellow
Internet Business Solutions Group

Panelists:

MICHAEL B. FILLER
Director, Public Services Division
International Brotherhood of Teamsters

VALERIE GREEN
General Counsel
Corporation for National and Community Service

ROBERT SHRIVER
Senior Policy Counsel
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Lunch Keynote:

JAMES MULLEN
President
Allegheny College

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. GALSTON: Good morning, everyone. Let me introduce myself. I'm Bill Galston, a Senior Fellow in Governance Studies here at the Brookings Institution. And on behalf of Governance Studies and Brookings, I want to invite and welcome all of you. And thank you for braving the weather and the traffic today to show up for this very important event on the future of the federal work force.

I'd like to begin by thanking the McCormick Foundation for their generous support and their infinite patience as we worked for a very long time to conceptualize this event and then to bring it to fruition.

No Brookings event, at least no Governance Studies event, would be complete without a quotation from the federalist papers. So to provide the appropriate elevated tone for the event, let me begin with Alexander Hamilton from federalist number 68, a quotation that my guess is that our featured speaker knows by heart, and Hamilton said that, and I quote, "the true test of a good government is its aptitude and tendency to produce a good administration." Well, if you think about the requirements for good administration at least in a democracy, it seems to me that they reduce to three, first of all, clearly articulated goals that enjoy broad public support; second, institutions and processes that are well designed to promote and support those goals; and third, talented and committed individuals to staff the institutions and to turn those aspirations into reality.

The focus of today's event is on the second and third of these requirements for good administration, institutions and processes on the one hand, personnel on the other, and the interaction between them.

We'll be asking and wrestling with a number of questions. First of all, are current federal government hiring processes and institutional structures encouraging our

best young people to enter public service and then to remain there? And to the extent that they could improve, how should we think about improving them?

In addition, we'll be asking what can other institutions such as NGO's and academia do to interest young people in public service and to facilitate their entrance into it. We're convened to discuss these questions at what I think is fair to say a difficult moment for the federal government in general and for public service in particular. Just yesterday, OMB Director Jack Lew, in remarks to the Partnership for Public Service, said, and I quote, "we've got headwinds of public opinion that are not necessarily going to be helpful in attracting the next generation of federal workers", and he was referring, of course, to public opinion about government.

He went on to acknowledge that public confidence in the institution of government is at an all time low, and that will be one of the focal points of Jim Mullen's concluding reflections later today.

In addition, there are financial pressures being brought to bear on governing institutions at every level, and the institution of public service at every level, as well. And I'm sure that Director John Berry stays up at night sometimes worrying about these pressures and worrying about how to balance them with the needs of attracting and retaining a federal work force.

So in the next four hours or so, you're going to be treated to a program divided into four parts. The first will feature remarks by John Berry, the Director of the Federal Office of Personnel Management whom I'll be introducing to you in just a minute. Then we'll have two panels, the first discussing reform for polls and perspectives, the second exploring obstacles to the implementation of needed changes. And finally, following a brief break for a buffet lunch, to which all are welcome, concluding remarks by James Mullen, the President of Allegheny College. If all goes well and speakers stay

within their allotted times, they'll be ample opportunity for questions and comments from the audience.

Just a few technical notes, those of you who are bearing electronic devices, please take a second to turn them off. Second, this event is going to be carried on CSPAN, not live, but pretty close, so if you want to improve your appearances, please feel free to do so at this time. And for those of you who are Twitter aficionados, the hash tag for this event is very simple, it is #FedHire.

Now, with further adieu, I have the privilege of introducing the Honorable John Berry, who has served as Director of the United States Office of Personnel Management since the Senate confirmed him for that position in April of 2009.

It turns out, I've learned, that Director Berry and I have more than a couple of things in common. He has a father who served in the U.S. Marine Corps, as I did a long, long time ago, and he has a BA from the University of Maryland College Park, where I taught in the Public Policy School for nearly two decades and served as Drafter Dean for about 15 months. He received a master's in Public Administration from Syracuse University; I assume that was the Maxwell School unless you tell me otherwise. He served in Montgomery County government; he was the Staff Director of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee. He served as nearly a decade as Legislative Director for Steny Hoyer, which must have been an amazing education in politics, policy and the way the two play off each other.

He served in both the Treasury and Interior Departments during the Clinton Administration. He did a stint with the Smithsonian Institution. And then after the Clinton Administration came a couple of jobs that sound sort of dreamy to me. You were the Director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and then John Berry was the head of the Smithsonian National Zoological Park, known to one and all as the National

Zoo, where he distinguished himself to such an extent that there was a lion named after him, true. It's really hard to top that.

At any rate, Director Berry, the podium is yours, and after you speak, I will manage the Q and A period. Thank you so much for coming.

MR. BERRY: I appreciate it, thanks so much. Doctor Galston, thank you so much for the warm introduction, the kind introduction. And my lion is growing up; they grow up even faster than kids. He was a cub a year ago and he's already like a teenager. So animals, you know, he's pretty cool to go and visit, though.

I also see a dear friend who is a wonderful friend of federal employees and retirees. He heads the Partnership for Public Service, Max Stier. Max, we couldn't do without you.

Last week Max and the Partnership honored federal employees for their amazing work and their contributions at an event called The Sammies Award, and I know he'll say more about that, but if you ever have a day where you start feeling down or you wonder about the potential of what public service can accomplish, go watch the videos for the Sammies winners. One, they will send chills up your spine, two, they will show you the impact that if we're good, you can accomplish in federal service, and three, they will show you the scale on which you can move the needle in federal service. And so, you know, it's an amazing thing, it was an amazing program, it's always the highlight of my year, and Max, thank you for your leadership and for what you do there.

You know, there was allegedly, you know, you all are familiar with the ancient – it's both a Chinese blessing and a curse, may you live in interesting times. Well, as Bill mentioned, the times are interesting for us in federal human resources right now and pretty much in every age and every department across the government.

You know, we're wrestling with severe budget constraints and will do so for the foreseeable future. And we're wrestling with negative attitudes and views towards our public workers.

But I am an optimist and I view living in these times as a privilege. Taking this job, I knew that the federal human resource picture was at a critical tipping point. It was a time for big ideas, for fresh approaches, and a time to reimagine all the aspects of our federal people policy across the entire career track, from how we identify skill gaps and recruit and outreach all the way through to retirement.

This is necessary because our work force and the world around us have changed. Now, the civil service that we revere and created today was, you know, dates back to 1883, in the Pendleton Act. The last major refresh was three decades ago. Well, one of my teachers at Syracuse University, Scotty Campbell, who held this position in a previous life, had just returned from his stint in Washington, and so I was privileged to learn about his efforts.

I saw it as an opportunity to essentially add again some new wind to the picture. Modern federal workers face very complex, new challenges. It was time for our personnel systems, in other words, to catch up.

In government, while work assignments can change with each session of Congress, it's important that we have smart, adaptable people, people who can also develop into leaders, people who are ready, willing and eager to take on their next challenges, whatever it may be, and that's why our first strategic goal is three simple words, hire the best, and that's what I'm going to focus on today.

We won't be able to have time to discuss the whole crux and what we hope to be doing with it, but we'll focus pretty much as the day's event on hiring. Let me give you one example to illustrate the kind of people we need today. When the

Affordable Care Act was passed, it directed the government to set up a program to cover Americans who, because of a pre-existing condition, could not get insurance on the open market. Now, most – a majority of states stepped up to provide those plans for their residents, but about 23 states and the District of Columbia opted not to.

Within 60 days of being asked by the Department of HHS, OPM and our team was able to step up using our experience based on the Federal Employee's Health Benefits Program to come up with a new program that we could solicit to provide a national option for people with pre-existing conditions.

We were able to do that within 60 days. The overhead rate is .08 percent. So I would, you know, it was a stiff challenge to meet, we met it, and the only reason we could meet it is because we had phenomenal people, phenomenal people who were flexible and creative and willing to tackle new challenges.

Now, those same employees also just announced yesterday that our plan, our largest plan, that over 60 percent of our employees and retirees are in, Blue Cross Blue Shield, will have its rates in this coming year, a rate increase of 1.6 percent. The national average is between four and eight percent. Our average overall in terms of all of our plan options will be about 3.8 percent, again, below that national average. That didn't just happen. It doesn't happen by passive interaction, it happens because we have creative people who understand the market, who can negotiate well, who know where to try to bend the cost curve, and on this one, where they focused their energies was on our pharmaceutical program, which is over 35 percent of our cost, and they achieved significant savings by doing it.

It shows you with the right people, what can be done. Now, those rates aren't perfect, you know. I would have – we strove to make them zero, because I know that this is a tough time for federal employees, they're living through a federal wage

freeze right now, so any increase in health premiums is going to be right out of their pockets, we understand that, and that's why we fight very hard to make it as low as possible. But I am certainly happy that this number this year is more than half of what it was last year. So we're not where we want to be, but we are certainly headed in the right direction.

Today's U.S. federal workers are heirs to our public servants, both civilian and military, who brought the world atomic energy, who traveled to the moon, came back safely, they decoded the human genome, and they created the internet. To keep doing great things like this and to innovate for the future, we need to build the model work force and become the model employer for the 21st century.

Now, let me be clear, we have fantastic employees right now, but many of them are eligible to retire. Almost half of our Senior Executive Service is eligible to retire in the near future. We need to constantly be thinking about pipelines of how we bring in that next cadre of talent. And that's why the President has launched several initiatives aimed specifically at recruitment and hiring.

His first one, the Veteran's Employment Initiative, was the first one out of the gate. Now, to me, Vet is an acronym, to me it means valued, experienced and trained. Any company that were to spend billions of dollars training its people and then giving them great leadership experiences and skills and didn't advance them or continue them along or give them opportunity to advance at that company would go out of business pretty quickly. Well, we do that with our men and women in uniform. We make a phenomenal investment in them as a country. They learn amazing things through their experiences, and we need to make sure we provide opportunity for them when they take off the uniform, to know that they are very welcome in the civil service.

So we have built an infrastructure of veteran's offices in each agency and we have set some very aggressive goals. Now, in fiscal 2010, we hired over 72,000 vets into the federal civil service. That is 2,000 more than we did in '09. But the more important statistic that I am very proud of is, during that same period of time, while we were hiring more, we also hired 2,700 more disabled veterans.

Now, the good news is, that trajectory is continuing. Looking at the first half of 2011, over 33 percent of our hires were veterans, compared to 30 percent for that same period last year. So if that holds, and we don't – obviously won't have the data for the end of the year until the end of the year, but we are on a trajectory to continue to increase that wonderful program.

The next initiative the President launched was to reform the hiring process. The goals of hiring are simple, the hiring reform executive order that he issued. He wants to reach the best candidates, make it easy for those candidates to apply, and increase, however, and raise the bar so that we know that the candidates we're getting are of high quality, so assessing talent and making sure that we're finding the right candidates.

Now, first off, we looked at this, and with the President's direction, he said it's just taking too long. We've been able to bring hiring time down about 15 percent. That's not where we want to be, but we're, again, heading in the right direction.

Our job announcements were sometimes 35 pages. I showed the President one that was 72 pages. He looked and he says, John, my position description isn't 72 pages, we've just got to fix this. We now have 70 percent of them five pages or fewer. My goal is two pages. All of OPM's are in that two to three page category and we're striving towards the two, I think we can do it. They're also easier to read, so people

don't need, you know, specialized language skills to understand those position descriptions.

We were able to finally, and I never thought this would be as big a fight as it was, but to get off of the knowledge, skill and ability essay island and onto the world of the resume. Only in the federal government would there be lobbyists hired to protect KSA's, but, you know, they have been defeated and routed and we are now moved into the world of the resume. We're also communicating better with applicants. Rather than sort of being a black hole while you're doing the hiring process, you're touched at regular points so you know where you are. Sometimes you don't make it into the best qualified pool or you don't make it into the interview pool, well, now we tell you rather than make you wait until the end of the game to find out.

And so we warn you, okay, you didn't make it this time, but we invite you, and we're looking at ways that we can increase the opportunity so that rather than having to reapply, you can be reconsidered for other opportunities.

These are starting and these are in the right direction to get us to be more competitive with the Fortune 500, which is our main competitor.

We've also developed state of the art assessment tools, and that's another – when we talk about finding the right candidate. One of my beliefs in why the resume step was so important was that the private sector spends billions of dollars developing assessment tools that are geared off of resumes. We couldn't take advantage of those because we didn't use a resume, now we can. And as agencies are shifting and being able to adapt and tweak those assessment tools, we're being able to apply them, and they are increasing the quality of our applicants, and we're looking at that by interviewing our supervisors and managers at three month, six month and one

year intervals after the hire has been made. Is this the person you want; is it the right hire?

Now, we've also tried to reinforce the skill base for our hiring teams. We have formed an online community of practice for recruiters; it is called USAjobsrecruit.gov, USAjobs, plural, recruit.gov. Anybody can go on this, but it is a great place for discussion forums and blogs amongst professionals and experts to be discussing what are the challenges, where are the tweak – what needs to be tweaked, how can we keep this fresh, how can we keep it responsive, and it's been wonderful.

The other thing, working on that IT training with our Chief Human Capital Officers Councils, we formed an HR university, which is, again, an online shared practice place for HR professionals so they can remain current.

So we are by no means finished, but we are now in the continuous and sustained improvement phase of this initiative. We're monitoring agency performance, we're spreading the word about practices that are working, we're pairing agencies that are already at the 80 day goal, which is our goal, some agencies are already there, we're pairing them with agencies that are lagging behind, we're pairing larger, more successful, deeper pocket agencies with smaller, poorer, slower agencies that need to keep up, and all of this is working as we keep it monitored through careful data analysis.

The next initiative the President identified and launched was hiring more Americans with disabilities, because we thought that was an essential component of hiring the best.

In our opinion, disability makes many of us stronger by making other challenges smaller in comparison. Two of America's greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had disabilities that were the building blocks of their character.

We all know that Roosevelt was wheelchair bound, but many don't appreciate that Lincoln struggled with depression during his life. And that's why President Obama established an ambitious goal. The federal government will hire 100,000 people with disabilities within five years. In my agency, I've set the goal that people with severe disabilities will make up three percent of our new hires. Now, we haven't hit it yet, but again, we're heading in the right direction.

The next group of innovators that we're trying to bring on and recruit is students. They faced some of the toughest, overgrown, weed-laden programs that you could have ever imagined.

I would go onto college campuses and kids would ask, you know, what is his step, you know, what am I, and, you know, none of these acronyms made any sense, I still can't remember what they are, the President said this is nuts, let's create three clean pathways, and so, again, he issued an executive order, struck down all of the old ways, created three clean ways, so that if you are in school, whether you're an undergrad or graduate, you are – if you're in school and want to work for the federal government while you're in school, you're an intern.

And those hours that you accrue while you're working count towards a total that, when you reach it, you can convert to the permanent civil service if you've done a good job.

The second program we've created is, you've got your degree, now what do you do? Well, rather than come up with all these acronyms, we're calling you a recent graduate. Hard to even make an acronym out of that, I guess someone could, but you're a recent grad, you'll be given two years, and that opportunity allows you to compete for any job for which you're reasonably qualified, you don't have to match your degree specifically with the job, but we're going to allow you that two year window after any

degree that you get, undergrad or graduate, to have an opportunity to compete, because you don't have the experience on your resume to compete at that point, so we're going to give you a little leg up to have that first boost in your career. And again, if that two year period, you do a good job, you can be converted to the civil service.

Finally, we're refreshing the Presidential Management Fellows Program. It's a wonderful program; it's been a great pipeline for junior talent that has a quick trajectory to rise into sort of junior leadership. We wanted to refresh it. To save money over time, we had eliminated the interview process, we've put that back. We're lifting the quality of the candidates in the pool and we think we're in the right direction. So those will be the three paths. Now, here's a huge opportunity, and why I'm so excited to be here with you all today is, we have issued regulations, draft regulations that would implement those three programs, and they are open for public comment right now in the Federal Register, and they are open until October 4th.

So here is your chance to shape public policy, and your input today that we get from this, we will fold directly into those comments, but we welcome all input between now and the 4th so that we can get this right. We're trying to improve the program; we want to make it easier for students to get in the federal government and to advance quickly, so here is your chance.

The next puzzle that we wanted to take on is diversity and inclusion. So the President recently, in fact, at the end of the summer, issued a new executive order on diversity and inclusion. It is one of the most important drivers, I feel, in innovation, having people with different perspectives and different backgrounds who will approach problems from different angles.

So this is an area where the federal government, I believe, has a special opportunity to lead by example. We are the nation's largest employer, and we have the

broadest reach in terms of both geography or mission. We prepare for and we respond to disasters, we secure borders, we serve every part of the nation, and we will only succeed in these critical missions with a work force if it hails from and represents and is attuned to the needs of every American community.

Inclusion is just as important. We need to get the most out of every federal worker, and that means making each of them feel included in the work place and in the agency's mission.

It doesn't help us to hire people because they're different and then marginalize them or not listen to them because they're not the same. We want every employee to feel connected to their organization and every employee to have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

Hiring people from every community and all walks of life brings us a rich array of those backgrounds and perspectives, and it is that variety of viewpoints and ideas that will make us stronger and more innovative, but only if we can encourage and create a work environment that has people speaking up to share their unique aspects of their experience, that is what inclusion is all about. And we will only get the full benefit of this initiative if it is present throughout our ranks in the field, at headquarters, and at our senior executive ranks. Per the President's executive order, we will be publishing our Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan within the next 70 days, and so, again, your input to this today is going to be very helpful to help us get that right, so we are welcoming your thoughts and your creativity.

All of these initiatives taken together are the foundation on which we will build the federal work force of the next few decades, and they are complimentary. I think many of you can see them; they're like a van diagram.

A student can also be a veteran, they can be a member of a minority group, and they might have a disability. Now that student has multiple paths to pursue. We need to pursue all of those paths, and that's where these programs have come, because when we miss out on talent, we're not doing just ourselves a disservice, we're doing the nation a disservice.

Let me just close with one quick thought before we go to questions about the place where I think we are in history. You know, many people think of history as a line that ascends to the current day. My view of history and being an amateur student of it is that that's not a correct interpretation. When you look at recorded human history, written human history, it's only 6,000 years, and it is a story that when one tracks or graphs it, is one of peaks and valleys, and sadly, the peaks are often far shorter than the valleys.

Think about the age of Pericles or the age of Augustus, less than a lifetime each, and yet they were able to, in that short period of time, build a lighthouse of civilization and a lamp bright enough that it shone across a chasm which we now refer to as the dark ages, so that at the end of the people trudging along there, could look up and see that light and recognize, that's human potential, that's what we can do. And in looking at that light, they found the birth springs, the well springs of the renaissance and the age of reason.

We've talked about the creation of the internet. You hold in your pocket, on your cell phone access to more information than the smartest scholar had when they had full access to the library at Alexandria. If Gutenberg's printing press launched the age of reason, what is that going to do? We are just on the edge of a massive age of creativity and discovery. I would argue, we are living amidst one of the highest and longest peaks of that recorded history, and we can tend to lose sight of it in our day to

day, in the rainy sky, or the 200 drop point on the Dow. History will take no note of the sky or the Dow, it will take note of the accomplishments that this generation has already secured, that will shine bright for future to come.

But the best news, I would argue, is that we are nowhere near done. We can't presume it will last forever, but we are nowhere near the end of that peak. In fact, I'd argue we're just amidst it. And so our generation living amidst that peak has a special and unique responsibility to the future, to children and generations yet to come, because we don't know whether they'll be higher or lower, but they will need to know that our light was bright and it was true and we built our lighthouse well.

Our men and women in the civil service do that. They take an oath to protect and defend our Constitution so it can go from one generation to the next. Many of you in this room have already taken that oath. Thank you. Thank you for your service, thank you for what you have done, and thank you for what you will do. God bless you and God bless the United States of America. Bill.

MR. GALSON: Well, Director Berry, thank you so much for those remarks. Not only did they get us off to a great start, but in this miasma of gloom that is your nation's capital, your optimism and enthusiasm are a real breath of fresh air, and I'm sure you're an inspiration to the people who work closely with you, and to the entire federal work force.

Because of your concise remarks, we do have some time available for questions and comments. I usually insist on questions, but given the very special nature of the next week where comments are very much in order, it seems to me that I will relax my usual strictures.

I would ask you to identify yourselves very briefly and make your questions or comments as concise as possible. There are roving microphones, and I believe the first question or comment is here in the second row.

MS. MCFALL: Thank you. Hi, I'm Laurel McFall and I'm the Executive Director of NASPA, the 275 graduate schools of public policy, public administration across the country. And over the years, our schools have graduated thousands of students into federal service, and I think there's a real concern about the prospects of the next generation coming out of our schools and interested in federal service. I want to ask you specifically about the Presidential Management Fellowship, one of the pathway programs that you mentioned. The program has been around more than 30 years and is trying to get the very best and brightest into federal service. I'm wondering what you have learned in the last two years of taking this on. Thank you very much, in fact, for taking this on. What have you learned about how to do this, and, you know, how do we find the very best people who cannot just serve, but can innovate, can lead, can address the significant problems? What have you learned from looking at international examples?

You know, other countries with their fast stream programs and so forth have become incredibly sophisticated in how they go after the very best people to serve in central government, in their civil service. What have you learned from looking at corporate examples, from the private sector, from state governments about, you know, what – what is this program, how do you see it, what does it need to be, how do we get there, what have you learned?

MR. BERRY: I think, Laurel, first, let me thank you and all your colleagues at NASPA for helping us to create this program. Let me tell you, you know, this – these three pathways couldn't have been formed without the great partnership with

you and so many of your members and the hard work, and so – and to many of you in the room who have helped us to shape this, thank you.

I think one of the keys was simplicity, which is why we chose the three pathways. That was reflected in visits to Google, to Facebook, to others. They say, you know, you've just got to have easy entryways, and that was reinforced by talking with our colleagues in Great Britain and in Canada and others who I've gone and spoken with, you know, interplay with my counterparts and our counterparts for the academies, and so that was sort of one of the guiding points.

The second was making sure that, you know, so the first part is make it simpler on the front end so people can apply and get in, and we're looking at all of the different angles of that. You know, one is the application process, you know, putting the interview back of face to face determination as opposed to a paper one.

We're reviewing, quite frankly, the test and whether we really need it. Is that assessment accurate, is it effective, is it helpful, and your comments have been phenomenal in that regard, as well. So we're looking, again, at just trying to streamline that opening and entry, and we welcome other thoughts of how we best do that. Some people see having the schools – having to go to the school and get a letter of recommendation first as kind of a barrier. You know, we're open to discussion on that point, whether that should remain or should go, you know, again, trying to simplify it, but we're trying to make it as simple as we can.

Second is, what we've got to do is, once we get these people in, because we lose them quickly because we don't create environments where they feel welcome or that they feel trained and accepted into the culture and the service, and so we have been developing and designing mentorship programs that are geared – one of

the practices we've tried to do at OPM is, before we just issue a policy, see if we can actually do it, and do it ourselves, with ourselves, and kind of be the test case, if you will.

And I have a young man named Maleek Walker who's done a phenomenal job. He complained that that very point, I got here, I sort of wanted to do good thing, and ran into the red tape and the walls, and were losing faith and was getting ready to leave, and I said, you know, no, we need you, we need your passion, we need your persistence, keep with it, and he took on and designed working with a lot of folks an incredible mentorship program that brought senior executives, mid managers in with our youth. Everybody benefited out of this, trust me. I was a mentor to one; I got as much out of it as I know the mentor got from me. But we've, you know, that's got to be a critical element of this, too. We can't just get them in and then forget about them.

And so I look at both of those sides of the equation as critical in this in working on it. But, you know, everywhere I travel, I try to meet with students and with either private sector or government colleagues who have ideas on these things, and it's been challenging.

But let me just end with this, it's kind of fun. When I went to Facebook, when you go to Facebook and to Google, they have you do a town hall, and so I met with employees in the town hall, and a lot of them were in their 20's and, you know, early 30's, and it was like, you know, I would rethink about the federal government, and when you start talking about impact again and scale, you really hit on cords that this generation is anxious, ready and willing to partake and participate in, with the same fervor that the generation that responded to Kennedy's call in the '60's. And, you know, when they understand the power and influence and impact they can make in the federal government, many of them got what we were talking about. When you can talk about, you know, look at providing pre-existing condition health insurance to hundreds of

thousands of Americans, who hereto before couldn't access insurance for their children or for their disease, horrible, that's now been addressed, and we have more to go, but you can see that impact and that scale, and that touches them.

This generation is ready. We need to make sure they know they're welcome, and then once they're here, make sure that the welcome mat doesn't just go away at the door; it stays with them throughout the entire process.

MR. GALSTON: Well, Director Berry, I pledged my first born son to your office as a guarantee that we would get you out of here on time at 10:00, and I would love to continue this colloquy for another half hour, but I love my first born. So may I just conclude this opening session of the conference by thanking you for not only getting us off to such a splendid start, but offering us a rich menu of policy initiatives and possibilities. And I think we will enter into the next three hours with an even greater measure of enthusiasm and optimism than we would have.

MR. BERRY: The doors are wide open, and that's – I was just in Chicago yesterday talking to the International Association of Human Resource Managers, and, you know, again, inviting these comments. We want to make sure we get this right, it's so important, and so your thoughts on this today, I can promise you, Doctor Galston, and to all the participants, you know, will not go onto a coffee table, they will not go onto a shelf. You're at a critical time, we can accept these comments during the public comment period, we can put them into action and make them reality. So thank you for everybody's time and effort today, and my promise to you is we'll run with it, so thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Thank you, thank you so much.

(Pause)

MR. GALSTON: Well, you've now heard from the horse's mouth what the federal government has been doing and initiating in the area of personnel over the past couple of years. We're now going to have a couple of panels. This first panel which I will be moderating will be focused on the question that I mentioned in my introductory remarks, namely, to the extent that current federal personnel practices and especially hiring practices have not yet reached the peak of perfection, what sorts of further improvements are possible, and what sorts of concrete proposals can be offered to make those improvements less aspirational and more real.

And the second panel will focus on that question, to some extent, but also with a greater emphasis on the kinds of practical, institutional, administrative and political obstacles to the implementation of needed reforms.

Without further adieu, let me introduce the participants in the first panel. You all have full bios in your packets, and so in the interest of time, let me just hit the high points and I will introduce them in the order in which they'll make their introductory remarks.

Max Stier, who's already been mentioned a couple of times in this conference, is President and CEO of the Partnership for Public Service, which has become in its what, slightly more than a decade of existence now, probably the, you know, A premier, if not the premier organization dedicated to the objectives that Director Berry talked about in his opening remarks. As preparation for his current job, he's worked in all three branches of the federal government; I think a pretty rare distinction. And he also serves on the Board of Public Agenda, a very distinguished organization dedicated to the improvement of public life in the United States.

Elaine Kamarck, full disclosure, a very old friend and co-author going back 25 years, is a Lecturer in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at

Harvard. As many of you know, she's had a long, interesting, distinguished career in politics and government. Perhaps most pertinently, for current purposes, she served in the White House from 1993 to 1997, where she created and managed the Clinton Administration's National Performance Review, also known as reinventing government.

And at the Kennedy School subsequently, she served as Director of Visions of Governance for the 21st century and as Faculty Advisor to the Innovations in American Government Awards Program.

Dave Uejio is the President of Young Government Leaders, and he is the most authentic representative today of what we're gathered to talk about, namely pathways for young adults into public service. He also serves as Special Assistant to the Director in the NIH's Office of Human Resources and manages the office's Presidential Management Fellows, a program about which you've already heard colloquy this morning.

And finally, Jackson Nickerson is the Frahm Family Professor of Organization and Strategy at Washington University's Olin School of Business. He's also the Director of the Brookings Olin Partnership and a Non-Resident Senior Fellow in Governance Studies here at Brookings. And he has taught and published widely in areas such as management and organizational strategy and leadership.

Thanks to all of you. You've all been given a hard cap of ten minutes on your opening remarks. And you'll get flashcards in the front row here informing you when you're just about out of time and then definitively out of time, and please subside at that point no matter how important the material that you'll have to suppress in the interest of time. Without further adieu, Max Stier.

MR. STIER: Thank you very much for organizing this. It's a terrific forum and it started off, as you suggested, as well as you can imagine with the energy that John

Berry brings to this position. And he has a very, very challenging job and is doing a very good run at this. As you said, there are clearly a lot of good things happening, but that will not preclude us to make recommendations, suggestions for other things that we're about to see in addition to what's already started.

And I wanted to actually start with my own sense of the nature of the problem because I think that will help frame the recommendations that we have about what we ought to be doing going forward.

And to my mind, there are really two root causes to management dysfunction in government, the first being that you have short term political leaders that don't align with the long term needs of the organizations that they run. In any other organization context, you typically will look to that top leadership group to look after the health of the organization they run.

You can't do that in government because those leaders will not actually be around for the impact that they actually have on those organizations. They're not incented to focus on the long term health because they won't see the benefit of those investments.

The second big root cause I think is the lack of real time information on performance. Again, in the for profit sector, you have very clear financial metrics that organizations are designed around. When you're trying to achieve public goods, a lot harder to measure them.

In addition to these root causes, we clearly have a set of macro conditions which are quite important. We've already heard John and Bill; you talk a bit about the headwinds that we face with respect to public perception. The budgetary constraints are substantial and not going away anytime soon. I think those have to be included in our notion of what the problems are that we face.

So what do we do about this? And if I could, then I would add sort of a couple two primary suggestions, or actually three. The first is to focus on that data point. And John Berry mentioned that OPM has already started, and I think it's very important that they have begun trying to collect information on the quality of hires, and I think that's actually essential when you look at the hiring process itself.

The hiring process, to my mind, is broken in four ways. First of all, it's too slow, secondly, it's too difficult, third, it's this black box that John described, you don't know where you are in the process, but all those pale in comparison to the fourth challenge, which is, we don't really know that we're hiring the very best, and that assessment of talent is actually vital. So it's all well and good and important to get hiring times down, but if you hire poorly, at the end of the day it doesn't much matter if you hire quickly or slowly, you still got the wrong person.

And therefore, you know, the emphasis needs to be on how you make sure you get the right quality. And in that sense, the data point that John talked about, the hiring manager satisfaction surveys that they've started to do are really, really important. And what I would love to see going forward is a more thorough and public presentation of that information.

We really ought to have it on a quarterly basis, it ought to be, you know, publicized quarterly in a way that allows you see by agency, by sub component of agency, what exactly is going on with respect to the internal perception of the quality of the hires they have.

Matching that to the applicant's satisfaction would be, again, a very powerful way of driving the behaviors in the hiring process that we actually want. And until you have that data, very, very hard to actually drive to successful conclusion the changes that we actually want to see. So collect better data around hiring satisfaction,

applicant satisfaction, make it available, organize it in a way that actually generates incentives for agencies to improve on those scores in very well real ways.

Another data point that is currently available is that the partnership that we've already started for the first time about a month ago publishing is what we call best places to launch your career.

So one of the very important things that OPM is doing today is collecting information in a very, very deep data set of what employees think about their job experience. And again, when you don't have those financial metrics, that employee viewpoint information is incredibly powerful.

The partnership produces our best places to work rankings; it is a fascinating I think set of insights into what organizations are doing well and provides real leads in how to improve a cross government management.

But what we chose to do is to try to extend the brand to look at a particular slice, those new employees, employees that have been in government for under three years and under the age of 30, and we now rank agencies on that basis. And I would, you know, suggest to all of you that it's fascinating stuff, you should take a look at it. You have agencies like the Veteran's Administration, which on the overall ranking, best places of rankings, about middle of the pack. They're number one when it comes to their new cohort, and that is really encouraging that they're doing some really smart, good things with their new talent, that next generation of talent.

To John's point, you know, you've got to, you know, get them in the door, but you've got to keep them. There's a very, very strong correlation between what they say with respect to their experience and absolutely their expectation about whether they're going to be there going forward. And the attrition data that we have lends even further proof that this is information that we should be paying real attention to.

And on the flip side, you have some agencies like HUD where, even though they are already at the bottom of the rankings, the overall best places rankings, that new cohort is even worse off there at HUD, and that's really problematic, and it's problematic because, again, that's our future. So collecting better data, finding out ways that we can use that data to understand how to manage effectively around talent is incredibly important and one place that I think we should be investing more in. The second area, you know, John mentioned the pathways program, incredibly important I think. Data point for us, today the federal government converts seven percent, seven percent of its interns, the interns that – student interns that can actually count, which means that's probably a larger number than truth because the federal government really doesn't count fully all the student interns that it actually has.

A reasonable benchmark would be around a 50 percent conversion rate. And this is an area where the federal government can make enormous strides and the pathways program is the right direction to be driving towards in this.

Why is this important? Well, come back to that assessment issue. There is no better mechanism of assessing talent than actually having an opportunity to work with somebody, and that's what student interns actually give you.

You get eight to ten weeks, or 12 weeks, or however long it is that you can actually see if the person is the right fit for the job. That's better than any test you can possibly design. And we ought to be seeing that as our primary mechanism of filling our entry level positions. There are all kinds of other advantages, including the fact that you can actually attract even a higher grade of talent, people are willing to try something for eight to ten weeks when they may not be willing to commit to it for, you know, for the first job after college or a university, but that's a place where we need to be placing increased emphasis.

What can we do concretely around that? Definitely make sure you comment on the regs that are out there supporting the good things that are there, and also we have to focus on the execution comparative here. It's a great set of rules that we have in place that OPM is looking to do, but if it's not done right in individual agencies, it's not going to do a lot of good.

We have another program called Student Ambassadors which is a build on this, and our notion really is, we can take those people that have interned in government and use them actually as the recruiters in chief for agencies back on campuses, and what we have found is, not only do they – they're the most successful -- research shows they're the most successful recruiters, you know, peers are more successful than cabinet secretaries at recruiting talent, but also it's a great way of getting your best talent back in. So we have a program at the Department of Energy, we had eight student ambassadors, seven of the eight are coming back to work at Energy, in part because they're recruiting for that entity and that's really powerful.

So my third and final point, seeing that I'm running out of time here is, a different take on this, we should be looking at compensation reform. A lot of conversation around our feds pay too much, too little, we really actually need an entirely different system that's market oriented. The system we have today was built in 1949 and it simply is not what we need for today's world. Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Well, Max, thank you for those concise, pointed and actionable recommendations. Elaine.

MS. KAMARCK: Good morning, everybody, and thank you for inviting me here to talk about a topic that I live with every day, because like some people here, my students all want to go to work in the government, not many of them do, however, and part of the reason is that there are significant impediments to working for the federal

government, and particularly for people who have other options in the work place, by the time they confront the federal government hiring process, they often go somewhere else. And so we have at the Kennedy School, we have a real interest in trying to improve the hiring process, and we applaud the work of Max. We should make him sort of an honorary faculty member because he is really helping us with our mission of bringing students into the public service.

Let me make five points and then I'll be quiet here. Quickly, I want to start with the nature of the problem, as well, but in a little bit more macro sense. We have a personnel system that is built for a government of 1950. That government was a government of clerks.

What the vast majority of people did in 1950 in the federal government was, they took paper and they put – if they were at Social Security, they recorded your earnings records, and they filed it so that you could file for social security. Or if they were at the Veteran's Administration or DOD, they were just doing paper.

In a government that was overwhelmingly a government of clerks, it kind of made sense to have one standard test across the government, one standard set of requirements, can you alphabetize, for instance, okay, it made sense. That government no longer exists. This is the most highly educated work force in not just the United States, in the world. We don't push paper anymore, computers do that. We have molecular biologists, we have nuclear physicists, we have tons of lawyers, okay, we have lots of people, no offense to any lawyers, we have people doing sort of amazing things, and yet we are stuck really with a civil service system that is really a civil service system of the last century.

So what can we do about it? Let me make three discreet recommendations. First of all, and one of them is already well under way thanks to the

work of Max and to the work of John Berry at OPM, normalize the hiring process, normalize, get rid of these tests, okay, nobody does these unless they're very specific skill focus tests, and that would be, frankly, at the agency or sub agency level, not at the central level, get rid of these tests, use resumes. The rest of the world uses resumes, there's no reason the federal government shouldn't be using resumes. Make the federal hiring process like any other hiring process and you might not scare away so many talented people. So normalize is number one. And I applaud the efforts that have gone on so far, but I also want to warn people that we got rid of the S171 in 1994, and it came back, so efforts to normalize don't always last very long. Number two, decentralize. The hiring process needs to be decentralized to departments and agencies as much as possible. In fact, already about 50 percent of the civil service is out from under Title 5, most especially in the national security area of the government.

Over the years they have simply passed their own laws, gotten on – tagged onto appropriations bills, et cetera, exemptions from Title 5, that makes sense. Now, what doesn't make sense is, often an agency goes to the trouble to get out from under Title 5 and then creates Title 5 again right in their agency. So we could use a little bit more not only decentralization, but creativity.

And finally, number three, see, I had normalize, decentralize, so I wanted to have marketize, but it's not really a word, so I'll use the more normal term, compensation reform.

An airline analyst for the export/import bank, an export/import bank uses a lot of federal credit to guarantee airlines. An airline analyst on Wall Street makes about \$400,000 a year. An airline analyst at the export/import bank makes about \$90,000 a year. Molecular biologists at Merck will make \$250 to \$750,000 a year, including stock options, et cetera. A molecular biologist at the FDA in charges of processes by which

Merck's drugs are approved or not approved is capped at the top of the civil service in what they can make. We can't go on like this, and I'll tell you why, because when we refuse to look at compensation reform for these very highly skilled competitive areas, we lose money as the government.

How many billions of dollars have been spent on totally screwed up information technology systems, okay, because we didn't have the talent inside the federal government to hire the people who actually could manage the creation of a brand new information technology system?

So it may seem like a lot of money in the short term to, gee, pay somebody more than the top civil service rate, but when you consider the waste over the years that we have all encountered in contracts gone bad, it's an investment worth making.

Finally I want to give you one caveat. We tried to do civil service reform back in the Clinton Administration and we failed. Why did we fail? Because we went to Congress and discovered something interesting about Congress, nobody cares, nobody. I'm telling you, as much as we think this is an important issue, in Congress, they don't care. Let me tell you what they do care about in Congress. One wing of Congress, the Republican Party, they care about getting rid of unions in the federal government, that's what they want to do, they want to do everything that they can to break unions.

The other wing in Congress, the left wing Democratic Party, would like to get as many union perks and advantages added into the statutes as they possibly can. No one is interested in this stuff.

We had one hero in the last Congress, Senator Voinovich, who's now retired, Senator Voinovich from Ohio, who really cared about the mainstream issues. But basically taking civil service reform to Congress is a really dangerous proposition,

because the kind of conversation that we are having here today is not going to happen in Congress.

So do as much as we can, and Max has really been very, very good at this, let's do as much as we can to reform this system using the tools that we have at our hands within the Executive Branch, simplification, decentralization, normalization, and let's look for some opportunities to do compensation reform. There are some precedence there in the army research labs at NIH where this has happened, let's see if we can do a little bit more of that. And finally, let's keep trying to get our students to go into the federal government. It's a little easier than has been expressed here these days because there aren't any other jobs, okay, so we have a little window of opportunity to get some real talent in the federal government, but we also want to keep them there, and we can't keep them there unless we have some fundamental reforms of that work place and make it a place where young people want to stay and thrive, which is I guess the handoff to the young person to my right. Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Thank you, Elaine. David.

MR. Uejio: Certainly, well, I just want to thank Brookings for the opportunity to speak with such distinguished company. I also want to note that I'm very excited to see so many young people in our audience this morning. Certainly with having such a distinguished panel, I think that I come at this from a very different perspective. I think we've heard a lot of fantastic macro level recommendations about things that can occur at the policy level, at the governance level, but I'm here to talk to you a little bit about what things look like on the ground level for folks that are trying to apply to the federal government, people who are in the federal government and attempting to lead right now. So the first thing I'd like to talk about very briefly is about the opportunity that exists, you know.

When the President was elected, I think that there was a unique opportunity for young people to be energized about public service, this real notion that we can make a difference in the world, and that the federal government is a key player in that.

Unfortunately, sort of through a series of circumstances, chiefly with the legal challenges to the federal current program, the primary vehicle for hiring of young people into the federal government disappeared, and so what you found were a group of people that I would argue are uniquely predisposed to public service left on the outside looking in, and I think that's a shame.

In addition to that, you know, whether you look at qualitative data about people's attitudes towards public service and/or sort of including the non-profit sector, there's I think also the grim reality of the economic situation facing young people today, and it's brutal. If you look at the statistics, youth unemployment rate hovers around 18.4 percent, sometimes it goes a little higher, sometimes it goes a little lower, but that's a really chilling thought for me, that one in five young people, many of whom are, again, distinctly predisposed to serve the government, are, frankly, unemployed.

In addition to that, they now face sort of the crushing weight of student loan debt. You know, recently we passed a brand new hallmark in which student loan debt actually exceeded credit card debt, and student loan debt is actually much more insidious in terms of how one can sort of deal with it, it can't be removed through bankruptcy, it will follow you throughout the rest of your life, I think that's a very grim reality for young people in this environment.

And then finally, you know, the largest barrier, and certainly my colleagues on the panel have really addressed this, is that the current federal hiring system explicitly values experience over potential. And I'm just going to tell you that, you

know, listening to the Director's remarks, companies like Google, companies like Facebook, America's most admired and vibrant companies, hire for potential, that's the fact of the matter, what's going on in the Silicon Valley right now, and it's also what's happening in the non-profit sector. This is something that I think goes underrated. When you look and drill down to student sort of experiences and expectations, you see a lot of sort of vibrancy around the non-profit sector.

However, it's inescapable that the state of the non-profit sector ebbs and flows with that of the federal government both in terms of funding and then the problems they're trying to confront, and that a lot of those people I think either don't know enough about the federal government to see that they could do the things that the non-profit sector does, fight poverty, improve educational outcomes, improve health care for all Americans in the federal government, and to me, that represents sort of a proxy failure of the government to capture that talent.

In many ways I feel non-profit organizations like Teach for America are eating our lunch right now. So – and that's to their credit, but it's to our loss.

So I do want to talk a little bit about prescriptions. Firstly I think that the pathways program is going to be a fantastic opportunity for young people. Frankly, the pathways programs perhaps most valuable aspect is, it's going to allow people to compete on the basis of potential moving forward, and I think that's very important. Now, no comment on whether that needs to be universal, but I think there needs to be a dedicated way for students that are both incredibly talented and incredibly engaged to join the federal work force, to make good things happen.

The second thing that I think would be valuable is some sort of greatly expanded usage of student loan repayment or forgiveness. Unfortunately, I feel that with this cadre of talent, many young people feel that they simply can't afford to join the public

work force, and I certainly don't think that that's the case, but I also don't think we can afford to let them go.

And certainly much as I think made of the straw man that is public sector compensation, you know, and the bylines of the press, but the fact of the matter is, if you can get somebody that is qualitatively superior, a really great person for the cost of \$5,000 or \$10,000 off of their student loans going forward, that, to me, seems like a pretty good business decision, particularly if you're going to be able to reap years and years of their service, sort of value above replacement if you will.

Another thing that I think would be really valuable, something that I just want to echo with Max, is that superior assessment tools I think would be extremely helpful in this regard. I think the federal government sort of lags a little bit in the assessment of talent. And certainly I think the folks on this panel are far more qualified than I am to address what specific prescriptions might look like, but I can just tell you from the ground level, you know, this generation of young Americans has been tested and scored and competing since they were born, right, and I'm seeing nods in the audience.

These aren't people that want a free lunch, right, these are people that understand the need to compete, intrinsically understand the concepts of performance management and accountability, and to the extent that we can change our compensation systems to reward that performance with monetary gain, with additional opportunity, that's going to benefit us for a generation.

And just to sort of close, I'll ride on the remarks of Director Berry, I really do feel that the opportunity that existed in 2008 as the President rode into office still exists. I don't know that those young people, and I go all over the country speaking to young people in and who want to be in the federal government, have been jaded. I don't

know that the stories about how federal workers are demonized really have diminished their desire to serve the public; I don't think it's as weak as that. These people just need the opportunity to get in and demonstrate their ability and be rewarded fairly through existing systems and through the support of leaders and the people on this stage. Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Well, David, thank you for reminding us vividly and vigorously just why we're here this morning and why we think about what we think about and why we do what we try to do. Jackson.

MR. NICKERSON: Good morning. David sounds like a business person, which I appreciate. I'd like to thank Bill Galston and this crack team for putting on a timely and useful event. It's always difficult to be the last person on the panel and say something new and useful, so I'm going to try to focus my comments on things that are a little bit different and hopefully won't overlap too much. But one thing I notice is that there's a lot of complimentary, a lot of connection in terms of all of our comments.

If we ask what the challenge is, quite boldly I'll say that the federal government is facing a war for talent, and its competitors are winning, we've heard that theme throughout the day. I see the challenge coming from three directions other than what's been said. First of all, in many ways, the federal government has a hiring system that fundamentally was designed, at least the last time it was designed, in the 1970's.

Hiring largely is based on finding and matching specific skills to specific tasks and jobs, this clerk idea that we heard earlier, yet the human capital needs have dramatically changed since the 1970's. For instance, tasks are changing rapidly and the skills needed also need to change quickly, especially when any type of technology is involved.

In the 21st century, the abilities to collaborate across divisions and agencies adapt to new circumstances, rapidly learn new things and lead others, what I refer to as agile abilities, are far more important and needed than specific skills for a specific job.

For instance, for most of you in the audience, think about how frequently the needs of your job change and the continuing evolution of your need for new knowledge and skills. I suspect that your agile abilities ultimately are what sets you apart in your positions. In essence, I believe the federal government is hiring for the wrong attributes. Second, my sense is that across our country, young people have a deep interest in and commitment to public service, like we heard from David. For instance, on my campus at Washington University in St. Louis, there's tremendous student effort poured into public service, but in the form of NGO's, not for profits, and the current popular thing is social entrepreneurship. Yet as we know, Americans tend to view public service in the federal government negatively.

It is my sense that America's youth do not believe they can either do good or do well in federal jobs. Ultimately, the federal government is not offering enough of what America's youth value to win that war on talent.

Third, in an attempt to automate and gain efficiencies over the past decade, OPM has centralized important features of the hiring process. While initially I think a good move, and we see progress being made in this dimension, centralization ultimately leads to a well known curse. Bureaucratic, cumbersome and complex hiring experiences create an adverse selection, which are those candidates who are most desirable are likely to be snapped up quickly by the competitors. In my opinion, marginal or incremental process for form without changing the organizational structure of how they're hired is unlikely to resolve this adverse selection. Assuming for the moment that

these formulations that I just offered have some currency, I propose a new systemic approach to federal hiring in the 21st century, one that can be done in the current confines of the law, I believe.

First and foremost, I propose that individuals be hired predominantly for their agile abilities instead of primarily for their knowledge and skills. A classic business illustration comes from Southwest Airlines, which hires primarily for a set of agile competencies, versus American Airlines, which hires predominantly based on skills. If any of you have any personal experience with these two firms, I think you'll understand the resulting consequences of those hiring processes.

Hiring based on agile abilities offer additional advantages, because, frankly, they resonate with OPM's executive core qualifications. Why not hire and select based on the leadership qualities that the federal government eventually desires? We don't do that now.

Second, I propose hiring the vast majority of individuals into government rotational training programs, what I refer to as GRT or great programs. These programs could provide six months to two years of rotations across agencies, offer lots of development opportunities and provide frequent assessments, somewhat like the presidential management fellows, but that's a very narrow and limited program. I think there should be a broader set of these programs.

From those who do well in these programs, allow agencies to compete for talents once participants complete the program. Doing so means that cohorts will be hired into the programs and not into specific jobs, which, frankly, can eliminate much if not all the delay and frustration associated with the current hiring process.

The program can attract highly desirable candidates because such rotation programs are the norm in business and are viewed as great career starters. If

done well, these great programs will give the federal government a substantial advantage in the war for talent.

Third and finally, I recommend decentralizing the advertising and interviewing for rotational programs, much like my colleague, Elaine. For agencies to hire from a rotational cohort, they would first have to find candidates to contribute to it. While such decentralization may seem redundant and less efficient, it ultimately will stimulate the creativity called for in finding great candidates and building stronger relationships with campuses and communities which are needed to win the war for talent.

OPM should centralize the process of rotation across agencies and the development investments, but also provide tools and guidance for shaping later career paths, which, frankly, most businesses do now and the federal government does not do. And a more systematic approach to career development will signal to candidates greater opportunities to do good and do well.

The 21st century changed federal human capital needs. It changed the expectations of America's youth and it ushered in a war for talent. The federal government should not try to fix its recruitment process, instead I think it should build a new recruitment system to fight and win the war for talent. Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Well, thank you, Jackson. And ladies and gentlemen, you've just witnessed history in the making. Four panelists who not only treated the assigned topic head on, but did so within the assigned time limit. As a veteran panel organizer, I cannot tell you how rare to the point of being unprecedented this is. So thank you all and, you know, thanks to each and every one of you for putting before us such a rich banquet of actionable reform possibilities. It seems to me that the audience has been extremely patient now, and so I'll call inaudible. Rather than going to cross talk among panelists, I'd like to go straight to you. We have about 20 minutes, and please

take advantage of them for your questions and comments to this distinguished panel.

Yes, please.

MS. VEAUDRY: Hi, Michelle Veaudry, Department of Navy, Civilian Human Resources. I wanted to touch upon the assessment tools I think Mark and David mentioned. We're just now completing our transition to the USA job, USA staffing tools, and we've been having some problems with the application manager piece of that, the assessment questionnaires, where applicants are marking expert pretty much across the board and that's not substantiated in their resumes.

So, therefore, we're getting certificates of people who are not qualified, they aren't best qualified by any means. And it's not necessarily a problem on, you know, reading the resumes and going through that, but with the tool itself, and the fact that people are just clicking through, the fact that I'm an expert is E on every single one, or B, whatever letter, and I was just wondering if you have any thoughts on perhaps forward steps with how this problem could be alleviated within the tool or what superior tools you had in mind.

MR. UEIJO: Well, thank you so much for your question. I will share a little bit of information. So I had the opportunity this summer to spend a little bit of time with the folks down at OPM looking at assessment methodologies around a particular program, present tool management fellows program, and I really had a great opportunity to conduct a lot of research on this topic, and I've got to say, I think across government, we really severely under resource not only how we do assessments, but really what a good assessment looks like I think is somewhat in dispute.

For example, part of the benchmarking I did was with, again, I'll pull – I serious don't work for Teacher of America, I'm just really envious. But I want to say that they really have a robust assessment process, it involves multiple layers of review, it's

continuously refined, which is amazing to me. The assessment for Teacher of America changes almost on a test by test basis multiple times a year, and you're talking about crushing application volumes, 100,000 applicants, but they're, nevertheless, able to assess people on competencies that are tied back to actual classroom improvements, which is – my jaw just dropped. That level of sophistication and commitment and resourcing about talent assessment makes a lot of sense to me, and I don't see it in, you know, in response to your question, it's not just that our systems don't possess that capability, it's they were never designed with that intention.

So prior to sort of tweaking the systems, I think we really need to reframe the paradigm on how we assess high potential talent to begin with. And I do want to turn it over to Max because I know that's definitely a big thing for Partnership.

MR. STIER: Yeah, you know, look, I think that, you know, there are several I think responses, one, Jackson I think raised a very compelling question about, you know, what is it that we're looking for, so the tools are only useful if you are, in fact, actually identifying the appropriate qualities that you're looking for and talent, and I commend his point that we really do need to be rethinking who we need in government with respect to the skills and the objectives that we have in government with the way that the world is changing. I think a second point would be to think about, again, at some level self-reported information from applicants is always going to be of limited value, and therefore, you have to be thinking about, you know, what are your other, you know, information sources.

So, again, whether it's the, you know, trying again to look to internship programs where you actually have an opportunity to work with people. Another place that I think agencies typically don't invest sufficiently in is, imagining assessment not as

simply at the point at which they decide who they're going to hire, but throughout the probation period.

So more often than not, again, to the point that you can't have any better assessment mechanism than the opportunity to work with somebody, we don't have agencies that are truly looking at that probationary period, whether it's a year or two years, depending on the nature of the hiring authority, really using that period to understand whether there's a right fit there. And if anything, I think the, you know, the burden ought to be shifted. Often times it's – the expectation is or the assumption is that the individual who's hired automatically converts over after a year, well, there really should be an affirmative decision on the part of the agency that that individual is, in fact, the right person for the job that's being filled. So I can't directly answer, you know, I'm not a psychologist, I can't directly answer specifics about assessment tool, but would I would offer to you is the suggestion that you think more broadly about what your opportunities are for identifying whether someone has the right talent, you know, are you looking for the right things, are you using experiential opportunities more, you know, fully, whether it's while they're there, or when they're – as an intern or when they're in the job, and structured interviews I think are critical.

You know, John mentioned the return of the use of energies for the PMF program, I actually think that's really important. I think that's a very, very critical data set. And again, there's an awful lot of information out in the private sector about what effective assessment is, and we ought to be using that more.

You know, Elaine used the term normalize; I think that's a very powerful one that we really do need to see in the federal work force. It's an insulated, isolated group and we need to change that.

MR. GALSTON: Other comments to this question or should we move on? Yes.

SPEAKER: Thank you. I agree totally your comments, they are very well expressed. And I see you put emphasis on the assessment of talent for young people. I see a contradiction there between objective and the emphasis on skill, because if you look into the pool of unemployed today in reality, there is plenty of talent of middle aged workers who, due to extent of circumstances, they're unemployed.

Now, if you are the OPM Director, where would you put the emphasis? How would you help young people in their assessment for skills, because they're young, they don't have such effort to show, versus the middle aged workers who are unemployed, they have more skill, there might be 01:26:05) So I see it's some kind of a contradiction there, emphasis on the skills for helping young people today under severe unemployment situation. Thank you.

MR. GALSTON: Comments?

MR. NICKERSON: Okay, they're all looking down here at this end of the table, so I'll have to say something. There are a few things that you brought up that I'd be happy to comment on. First of all, part of my proposal is the idea that you bring in a cohort of people. It's very difficult, in responding to Michelle's comment, to come up with an accurate assessment, especially if it's self-provided.

In terms of what their capabilities are, it takes a while for them to be in the work environment and see if they can collaborate, see if they can learn in a rapid rate in that context, see if they can improve. And so it's important to have a period, whether it's six months, a year or two years where you are developing them and you can see if they can respond.

Now, I say this in terms of young people as a way to attract and retain the top people, but, frankly, a similar thing can be done with a middle aged population. In fact, a number of people who are out of work today would certainly be candidates, to bring them in and have a serious period of time in which, first of all, we allow them to be hired into the government, and second, we see if they have these agile capabilities. You might find that some do and some don't, and the only way to really figure that out is to, as Max is suggesting, try them out for a while. That would require us to think a little differently about how we hire and how we treat these initial periods of trying out people. But I think the same approach could be used for young, middle, even old people, but you have to have some minor adjustments along the way.

MR. STIER: I might just add one comment, and that is, I think your question points out another issue that I think is very real for the federal work force, and that is that it, by and large, does not hire substantially at the lateral level, so my data is going to be not entirely recent, but somewhere between 12 and 15 percent of the new hires at the GS-12 and above come from the outside.

And I think the challenge that you face internally in government as a result of that is that you really do have a work force that doesn't have the breadth of experience that it ultimately needs to get the job done. I think you clearly need to develop talent internally in any organization, but having folks that have experienced other sectors, other levels of government, other agencies, that is critical in a world in which so many of our problems actually have to be addressed cross organizationally. So I think we actually do need to examine hard the paradigm we have today in which – and it is the public perception, it's, you know, we need that new, young cohort of talent in government. Frankly, we need a work force in government that better represents the experiential mix of our whole society, and that includes people that are mid level in their career, or

another talent source that I think is quite extensive, and we've done a fair amount of work on this, are boomers retiring from the private sector who frequently have a lot of the critical experience, whether it's in IT, as Elaine, you know, suggested, that we desperately need, and frankly, just like this new generation coming up through school today, they're actually primed, and a lot of them are retiring, and they don't want to play golf for the next 20 years.

The idea of having a second career, an encore career in government might be very attractive to them. But again, I think we need to be examining the paradigms that we've been operating under, because they just don't work today.

MR. GALSTON: Next question or comment. Yes, please.

MS. CROCKETT: Hello, Emily Crockett from Campus Progress. So for young people who are looking to work in government, just, you know, who don't really know anything about this, about the granular policy level of things, can you just sort of walk me and, you know, them through what the process would look like, you know, how they apply to get hired, and what they can expect to find now as it is broken and what they can maybe expect to find when it's fixed?

MR. GALSTON: That's for everybody.

MS. KAMARCK: I'll give you a start, just feedback from my students, okay. You get – you go to graduate school at a good university, you think you actually know something and have some skills about public policy, and then you apply to the federal government. The first thing that happens is you fill out a form that is absolutely interminable, unbelievable.

The second thing that happens is you read a job description that is absolutely incomprehensible. You bring it to your professors; your professors say that's incomprehensible, nobody knows what the job is. The third thing that happens is, you

manage to get through all those hurdles, you send it all in, and then you hear nothing, absolutely nothing, not just nothing for one month, nothing for a year, nothing for 18 months, by which time you have said to yourself, wow, there's other jobs out there, and you have taken another job. Then when you have that other job, you sometimes get a call out of the blue, 18 months later, saying, gee, I'm calling from the Department of the blank and we just looked at your resume, at which point my students say, are you nuts, and that's the end of working for the federal government, okay. It is a terrible situation.

Now, add onto that the following, if you are, as many of our students are interested in working in the national security sector of the government, which after 911 became a really important place, people with all the good values David talked about want to work in national security, a couple of things happen. In addition to all that, you have to get a security clearance. Your security clearance can take two years.

If you're really talented and you have lived abroad, say in some strange places, where the United States government is in desperate need of language capacity, your security clearance takes a really long time because, in fact, they have to get around to make sure that when you were in those strange places, you really were an English teacher teaching in a postune school and not being recruited into the Taliban. And so it's forever and ever and ever. And, in fact, I have not jokingly suggested to our students that they, in fact, start their security clearance before they even come to the Kennedy School, and maybe then they'll have a shot when they graduate of going to work in the national security apparatus. It is an incredibly difficult process.

Now, having said that, I want to give you a good side. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, who's a colleague of mine at the Harvard Business Schools, talks about jobs having two aspects, the two ends, money and meaning. The federal government isn't

going to compete in the long run with money, although they do better than most people think, okay, especially in this economy, but even not, they really actually do just fine.

Meaning is where the federal government really makes a difference, and I'll tell you a little story. Some years ago my son went to work in a refugee camp on the Thai/Burmese border with a group of very unfortunate people called the Karen People, who are in a mess. I won't go into why, but they're just – it's a sad humanitarian story. And I got interested in who was funding this, where is this money coming from. It was a little – kind of murky, but there was a lot of aid going there to keep these people from starving, to give them schools and make sure they were housed, et cetera. They were sort of a people with no land.

So I scratched and scratched and scratched and had to go through various, you know, hurdles, and guess where the money came from. There was about \$8 million being spent to keep them from starving on the border there, \$6 million came from the U.S. government, from USAID.

Now, it was funneled through all sorts of other things, so you really couldn't tell unless you kind of knew how to unpack that. And that day, a student came in, and he was trying to decide whether to go to work for the U.S. government or to go work for an NGO in, I think it was Africa some place, and I said, well, here is the trade-off, right, you might feel better every day personally in that NGO, because you're going to feel like you're in charge, et cetera, but if you're the guy at USAID who every year slips that \$6 million, which, let's face it, is a small amount of money, in the budget to keep the Karen People alive, you're a big deal, you're a really big deal, and that's where meaning comes in in the federal government. There are not many jobs in the federal government that don't rank really high on the meaning scale. And so that's – if you can manage to get through all that other stuff, it's really a great place to work.

MR. NICKERSON: If I can have 60 seconds just to juxtapose how hiring typically takes place, I participate in a lot of placement activities at the university, and just to give you this position, typically firms announce that they're going to come to school, they are advertised to students, students submit a single cover page letter and a single resume, and based on that, there is an initial screen, in part because representatives of the firms come and talk to the faculty and say, we have this relationship with you, you know our culture, you know what we're doing, what are the right groups of students that we should interview.

And so in a conversation, we'll have a broader list, and then they'll whittle it down. They come to campus, they have sign ups, the students are selected; they go in and have a 30 minute interview. At the end of the day, or in a few days later, we find out which students get selected to go and visit those firms, where there's usually another whole day and sometimes two days of interviews. In many ways, it is easy for the students to find these opportunities. There is a relationship that's built up between the organization and the faculty, so the faculty know the culture, know what value can be created, know what they're looking for, and there's this matching process where people are involved every step of the way, and it's done rather easily for students.

And I just bring this up to say that that's an interesting contrast to the story Elaine described in terms of how much of the federal government tries to hire young people.

MR. UEIJO: So let me also add one thing, if I could, to it, because I think actually the federal hiring process, as challenging as it is, in its own way selects for the real entrepreneur, because there are, in fact, real ways to get in, and I'm going to – I notice time is passing quickly here, so I just want to point out a couple of folks that I get to work with every day which are terrific, Lindsey and Margo, who are back there, and if you

want to have more information about that process, raise your hand and they'll be happy to talk to you.

But there's also a web site called makingthedifference.org that walks through and tries to offer a real, you know, guidebook about how to get through the hiring process as is currently stated. And as you heard from Director Berry, there are some substantial improvements that are – have already occurred and that are taking place.

But fundamentally, the student internship is a great example of a way you can get hired, can be converted very easily into a full-time employee. It's not as easy as it will be once the pathways program is fully implemented, but there's a program called Skept, if you serve in a student internship program with a federal agency, and they think you've done a good job, boom, you can get hired right away.

The PMF program, the Presidential Management Fellows program that you heard about earlier, is another, you know, very streamlined program that exists today for talent that they want to come in.

And then, frankly, as with almost any other organizational experience, and Jackson is clearly right, you know, a lot of private sector organizations do this right, at the end of the day, relationships still really matter, and if you believe you can simply deal with the federal government by submitting your application and waiting the 18 months, then you probably are going to be in trouble. But if you know people there and you actually get advice from people about how you should be following up, who you can follow up with, what other opportunities are there, and you network as one would do in any other context, then you increase your odds quite a bit.

And as Elaine said, at the end of the day, even with all of these challenges, there's no substitute for the kinds of things that you can accomplish, the

differences you can make for your government, and why not, it's our tool for collection action, it makes a lot of sense.

MR. GALSTON: Well, that's a suitably high note on which to end this panel. Please join me in thanking our panelists for a very lively hour.

(Recess)

MR. GALSTON: Well, let me now invite the second panel to join us onstage.

One of our panelists for this second session has been temporarily delayed, but should be with us shortly. But in the interest of keeping things on schedule we will work around that and get started anyway. And my last remaining task this morning is to introduce the moderator of this second panel and then leave.

Said moderator is Alan Balutis, who brings an extraordinary background to this morning and to his task. (Phone rings) Unbelievable. This is a new cell phone, ladies and gentlemen, and I have not yet figured out how to work it. I thought it had been turned off. My deepest apologies. I had my first one for 13 years; I then sent it to a museum of technology for all of you young people in the audience. You wouldn't recognize it as a cell phone.

Okay, let me try again. Alan Balutis is a director in the CYSCO Internet Business Solutions Group. I will -- I promise not to hold you responsible for the performance of my long-held shares in your enterprise. But, I hope for better days.

Alan came to CYSCO after three decades of work in government, academia, and both the private and nonprofit sectors. He held senior management policy positions in government. He served as the head of management and budget of the Department of Commerce for more than a decade, and he was its first chief information officer. Among his many other distinctions, he is a fellow in the National Academy of

Public Administration, and he is the member of not one but two halls of fame. Both for Federal Computer Week and Government Computer News.

So, you bring not only human but also technical and technological expertise to this task. And we're looking forward to the panel that you will now moderate. Thank you very much for joining us, Alan.

MR. BALUTIS: Well, good morning. And Bill, thank you not only for moderating and introducing but for all your work and your team's work in putting this session together today. I think it's been a fascinating discussion. And I hope we're able to continue and build off of it in this session.

We just marked a couple of weeks ago the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. And one of the catch phrases that came into popular use thereafter and has continued throughout the decade is the notion of after 9/11 everything changed.

While much has changed, some things have remained the same. And one of those things that has remained remarkably the same throughout this last decade is the way in which government actually is organized and manages.

And in fact I think it's not too far-fetched to suggest that one could go back through the time-tunnel and find somebody who had worked in government in the '50s and '60s and kind of bring them back into government today to join some of their colleagues who are still there and have never left. And after a couple of days of adapting themselves to their new cell phone and their laptop and their PDA, I think they would actually find themselves quite comfortable. Because the way in which government does human resources, the way it hires and fires, the way it does acquisition, the way it does property management -- and certainly the way it does budgeting -- is still very, very similar to the way it was done 40, 50, 60 years ago in government. That's certainly not the case in the private sector, where companies that are doing things or try to do things

the way they used to 10 or 12 years ago are ones that are threatened with extinction.

Some of that I think is attributable to, in fact, the consistency in some aspects of the leadership in government. We talked about the changeover in the top a little bit earlier. Where senior political appointees -- their usual lifespan is only 18 to 22 months. But in much of the leadership of the federal government and its senior executive cadre, that's remained remarkably stable. And many of the people who make up those ranks are people like me. They're white, they're male, and I'll use a kindly euphemism -- they're seasoned.

And in spite of the fact that we've heard for any number of years -- it was one of Director Barry's predecessors that talked about the impending retirement tsunami that was going to sweep across government. In fact, somehow the tsunami wave broke somewhere in the midst of the Potomac and really has never reached the shores of government.

But we may be reaching a time when it builds again, and in fact does crest. Because as I think Bill noted in some of his opening remarks, as we see about some of the deficit and budget reduction solutions that are being crafted on the Hill, many of them will no doubt touch upon the federal personnel community. We've already seen proposals to replace only one out of every two or out of every three people who leave. Putting a freeze on salary, no bonuses, and so on.

And so in fact a number of people that may have been staying on with the notion of I can add to my high three, that kind of incentive disappears. So, in fact many will leave.

And to that I say: good. Because it's time for you to go. It's time for a new cadre of leadership that has been waiting for some period of time to -- for a chance to be elevated in the ranks, for them to be given an opportunity to do that. Because

some of the research suggests that, in fact, they're not only more comfortable with current technologies, they're more collaborative, they're more interested in teaming, they're more flexible and agile and, hence, they may be more able to deal with the array of challenges and crises that increasingly face government today.

So, we've had some very moving and inspirational comments from Director Berry. We've had an excellent panel where we've looked at some forward-looking ideas. I just have to say I'm sorry that David and his heart -- of mentioning innovative companies could only get to Facebook and Google. He couldn't even give a passing reference to CYSCO. I intend to speak to him about that immediately after this session.

But now we want to look at kind of some of the things in terms of what's happening now? How are we working toward reform and change? And as we do so, what are we learning about that change and reform process? What are some of the obstacles and barriers? And what have we learned about how best to overcome them?

And I think we're very fortunate to have with us two not only -- certainly not in my category of seasoned, but experienced executives -- and I think true change agents -- as part of our panel. And I do remain hopeful that our third panelist will make a late and dramatic appearance and be able to join us at this session as well.

So let me introduce our two panelists that are here. Rob Shriver, who is the senior policy counsel at the Office of Personnel Management. I think at several points in this morning's discussion you've heard about the -- talked about the Presidential Management Fellows Program. We've talked about the Pathways Program. We know that there's some changes coming. We've asked for comments. Director Berry asked for comments on that.

Rob is, I think, can be given a lot of the credit for the work that's been

done to-date on developing that initiative. And as I mentioned to him earlier, I credit him not only for what he's done, which I invite you to look at the regulations. I think they're very substantive and innovative. But how he's gone about doing it. I think often how you do things is as important as what you've done. And he's done this in a very collaborative and open fashion, partnering across the community and with the universities and associations.

And I think he's going to give us a little deeper level of understanding and insight about what's happening in that program and what we might expect from it in the future. And of course, Rob came to this position after working for a number of years in a similar legal advisory role with the NTEU union.

But our current union representative and leader is Michael Filler, who is the director of the Public Services Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. And who also serves as a member of the President's National Council on Federal Labor Management Relations. I met Michael first a number of months back when I saw an article he had published, I want to say in the *Federal Times*, that got into the issue of how might one improve government performance and productivity. I thought it was an excellent article, and I've had the chance to work with him since then and learn from him about what true manager, employee, government, union cooperation, collaboration really means.

So let me turn it over to each of them. The same ruthless Brookings people who have been timing the earlier panel are still present here to ensure that we stay in the 8 to 10 minute timeframe. So Rob, we'll go to you first and then turn it over to Michael. And thanks for being here today.

MR. SHRIVER: Thank you, Alan. And thank you for being such a good partner in these efforts. We've been over to NAPA a couple of times and have had some

very productive conversations about the federal hiring system overall and the Pathways Programs in particular.

Thank you to Brookings for hosting us today, including beyond this panel with my good friend Mike Filler over here. Also, a fellow NTEU-er.

I'm very excited to be here today, since coming to OPM in June of 2009 as part of the Obama Administration I've spent a lot of time working on hiring reform issues. Many of the initiatives that Director Berry mentioned this morning, from our overall hiring reform to our Vets Employment Initiative, employment of people with disabilities, diversity and inclusion, and of course the student Pathways. I've been involved with those efforts, as well as with the labor management efforts that Mike has been such an important player on at our National Council.

I wanted to start by -- maybe this is my lawyer in me. I wanted to rehabilitate the witness a little bit from the last panel. And I wanted to talk a little bit about what the current hiring process looks like, because yes, certainly we have our problems. But I think that we've come a long way, especially since May of 2010 when the President issued his directions to the agencies to really overhaul the way that the federal hiring process works.

Let me just read off a few numbers to you that will show you, I think, the progress that we've made. You know, first of all we look at the job announcements across the federal government. And I can tell you that in our view 86 percent of them are now written in what we would characterize as plain language. And that's a significant improvement, up from just half of them prior to the May 2010 reforms.

Two-thirds are two to three pages long. Again, that's up from 24 percent prior to the May 2010 reforms. 92 percent allow you to apply with a resume. As Director Berry said, we've gotten off the KSA Island. Indeed, 97 percent of those job

announcements are free of the requirement that you answer essay questions at the initial phase.

We've shaved 26 days off the average time to hire. It was 131, it's now 105. That's still too long, as Director Berry mentioned, but I do want to point out that that includes the background investigation and suitability determinations that go along with a federal job. So that 105 days is inclusive of that.

So, that was sort of step one in hiring reform. Is what should we do with the overall process to normalize it, as one of the previous panelists said. And I think you can see that we've made a lot of progress there.

Now, the problem is if you're a student or a recent grad and you don't have much experience and you go on to our website, USA Jobs, and you find these now shorter, more clearly-written job announcements and you send your resume in and apply, you're thrown into a pool of sometimes thousands of workers. And 90 percent of them have more experience than you. And it's true that experience is a very comfortable thing for agency HR professionals to examine. It's objective; it has stood the test of time. You know, it's stood up under legal challenge. So, there's a comfort level there with assessing talent based on experience.

And as a result of that, you wind up with statistics like we have from a 2008 report from the Merit System Protection Board where in federal government entry-level jobs there are more people who get hired who have 20 or more years of experience than have 1 year or less. That's just the way the system has been administered.

That's the issue that our Pathways programs are intended to address. Our Pathways programs will allow students to compete against other students. Inexperienced, recent graduates to compete against other inexperienced recent graduates. Advanced degree holders interested in leadership jobs in the government to

compete against other advanced degree holders interested in leadership positions in the federal government. They're clear, they're straightforward, they're competitive. They're certainly competitive, and they're going to be more transparent.

Right now if you look for an internship opportunity in the federal government and you go to USA Jobs, you may not find many things that come up. That's because there's really not a requirement that agencies post their internship opportunities on USA Jobs. Our proposed regulations would change that, and they would say that agencies have to at least provide notice of what jobs they're looking to fill, how many, and where they are through these Pathways programs.

We've balanced that by maintaining some flexibility for the agencies to run their own recruiting assessment and selection process. They still are able to do that, but they have to provide some basic information on USA Jobs so people know how to get to the opportunities they're interested in.

The proposed regulations also build in career development, training, and mentorship requirements. It isn't just about getting in the door; it's about having a good experience once you're there. And whether or not that translates into a permanent federal job, we think it's good for the federal government to have interns who go back to their campuses and talk about what a great experience they had. You know, maybe it wasn't a good match, maybe the agency didn't have the budget, but I learned a lot and I did great things. And I would consider the federal government later in my career. And if you get a chance to do it, you should consider it. That's what we're looking for.

The regulations are very detailed. They're 87 pages long, and I've gotten a question -- you know, how are you making things simple and streamlined with an 87-page regulatory package? Well, the fact is our Title 5 regulations are 3 volumes like this, and we've boiled all of that down into an 87-page regulatory package. But I would

encourage you to go to our website, our hiring reform website, take a look. Our supplementary information describes what these programs will do. And we really do value everybody's comment on this.

Let me talk a little bit and pivot to some of the challenges that we face, not only with these particular reforms but with other reforms going forward. First, one thing that I think I've -- has been even more heightened in my mind today -- was the fact that we as the policy setters really need to balance what are some definitely competing stakeholder interests. We heard from the previous panel, okay, we should be decentralizing the hiring process. And large -- the hiring process largely is decentralized. And that's how we wound up with 25 KSA essay questions being asked by agencies. So, there's this balance between decentralizing and centralizing. The President's May directions -- May 2010 directions -- were somewhat of a centralizing in that it was telling agencies this is how you will do it. So there's this balance between how much is centralized, how much is decentralized.

We heard hire all your interns; that's the way to do your entry-level hiring. The unions and, perhaps, the veterans groups, they may disagree. They may say hey, wait a minute. What about our people who are working in the government, who are looking to move up. They're in one job, maybe they're a revenue officer at the IRS and they want to become a revenue agent. Why aren't you looking there?

We've, you know, heard about, you know, decentralizing and letting agencies do their own sort of targeted advertising and whatnot. But we have a strong public policy reflected in the hiring laws that respects our veterans. And that our veterans are entitled to compete for any job for which they're qualified. And if they don't know what jobs are out there, we're kind of losing that.

So we've got to balance our competing stakeholder interest. We also

have to win over our career employees. When political leaders come into agencies and just try to ram policy changes through without involving the career employees, it's a recipe for disaster.

I can tell you that hiring reform has been so successful because it's been a very inclusive process. We've worked tirelessly with our career staff. Angie Bailey, a career employee at OPM. This is her initiative, this is her hiring reform. With leadership from Director Berry, leadership and the muscle from the White House, that is essential.

And the last thing I'll mention -- because I think I'm out of time here -- is that we really struggle and need to do a better job of getting message out to the rest of the country. We're a pretty small agency and we do the best we can to get around and out in the field. But we still are finding is that agencies outside the Washington area haven't quite caught up as much as the headquarters ones have with the changes that we've been making.

So, thank you very much. And I look forward to any questions you may have afterwards.

MR. FILLER: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to thank Brookings for hosting today's event, and for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts as a practitioner for 30 years and a parent of 4, 2 undergrads, 1 graduate of Alleghany College in 2010 now attending law school, and a June 2011 graduate seeking employment. So I'm here to find answers as well as to share some experiences with you this morning.

When I reflect back on some of the experiences our kids have had in the federal sector through internships, there were a couple areas that I think need some work. One has to do with what agencies do when they have young talent onboard. Whether it's through an internship or some other program, they need to make sure that those people actually have meaningful work to do so that they're really learning some

worthwhile skills on the job and not just answering the phone, licking envelopes, or punching holes in paper. So that's an area where I think improvement can occur, where we don't need Congressional intervention. And maybe the Partnership for Public Service, the Kennedy School, CYSCO, somebody can look at that and try to provide guidance to agencies so that when young talent is onboard through internships and other programs that they are effectively being utilized.

The other thing that we're challenged with is the whole idea of this generation -- the information age. And you can get answers at the click of a button on a cell phone. Well, the federal process doesn't work that quickly. And so maybe we need to moderate our expectations as to what it really takes to go through this federal process.

There's no doubt it needs to be improved, and I think this Administration wants to do everything it can to make that happen. And there are some things that OPM can and will do. There are other things I think the agencies can do. It's within their power, especially in those situations where they get special authority from the Office of Personnel Management, to utilize some special hiring techniques.

Those agencies have the ability today to analyze their processes. They need to sit down, they need to flow chart the steps, they need to find out how much time it takes to go through each step of the process. And they need to improve those weak areas.

And you know, the personnel community, the HR specialists and the like within those agencies need to act with a sense of urgency, right? There are plenty of challenges that everyone faces on a day to day basis. And I know in the current climate it's especially difficult when we're talking about potential shutdowns, continuing resolutions, the debt crisis, buyouts, and the like to think about well, what can we do to bring young talent on board?

You know, Rob also mentioned that the background check process -- that is an area that really needs to be improved on as well, because that can create so much delay. So I think there are things that can be done today that's within the power of each of these agencies and also working with OPM, where fixes and reform need not be legislated. And that's part of my assumption today. That we don't need to legislate to really accomplish true reform.

And I want to look back at the last 15 years, where certain specific agency reforms were undertaken. My first example has to do with the IRS, the Reform and Restructuring Act of 1988 -- or 1998, I'm sorry. That came about because of Congressional oversight. There were many hearings, a lot of horror stories. And so Congress ordered the IRS to restructure itself. So, when that law gets passed, does that mean it just happens automatically?

Well, no. It's one thing to pass a policy or to pass a law. It's another thing to enact that policy. And so at that time, I worked for a union -- the National Treasury Employees Union -- and we had to make a decision whether or not we were going to work with the IRS to accomplish the reforms that were mandated by Congress. Because we had a choice to make, and that was whether we wanted to fight it through the judicial system, possibly return to Capitol Hill and try to change the legislation, or see if we could work within the parameters established by Congress.

We decided to work in a collaborative way. And we worked very well with agency management, with labor, and with frontline employees. And many of these employees were involved in this reform process. So even though Congress set the stage to initiate the reform, whether or not you could succeed really is a matter within the agency itself. And so it was up to the parties to enact a way to accomplish the reforms that were mandated by Congress. And this was a process that affected over 100 million -

- 100,000, rather -- employees at the IRS. And it was done very well.

Now if we fast-forward the tape past 9/11, we've heard mention of how security has been heightened. So in the wake of the 9/11 disaster, Congress took a step to create the Department of Homeland Security, and also to move to modernize the Department of Defense. And both of those Congressional actions I think were met not with the best change models. There were some difficulties associated with the DHS restructuring, and I think over time those will work out. But just putting that many pieces together are tremendous challenges for any organization.

With the Department of Defense, the Pentagon took the opportunity after 9/11 to request special authority to modernize their labor and personnel systems. And there was a process created that lasted for a period of time that did engage labor and employees. But unfortunately many of those recommendations were not accepted. So, we were put in a position of trying to decide whether or not to just let it go or to challenge those changes. And so we decided to both mount litigation and a lobbying effort. And it took several years, but the law was changed. What was known as the National Security Personnel Act was changed, and the clock was turned back.

And the bad part about that was they tried to incorporate a new model of compensation. And one of the earlier panelists talked about the need to make changes in compensation. But that just can't occur overnight through an act of Congress.

But as a result, the challenge is the compensation system was changed back to the way it was. And so that has an adverse impact on a workforce that's numbering about three-quarters of a million. So, we learned from that experience. And I'm pleased to report today that we do have a more collaborative approach to that.

Since last year, we have been working very well with the Department of Defense, Labor and Management, frontline employees and supervisors. And before the

end of this year, we expect to have a set of recommendations presented for consideration by Congress and the Administration. And so while we had some problems early in the establishment of the DoD changes, I think we're on the right track.

We're also on the right track with respect to changes government-wide. There is something called the Joint Labor Inter-Agency Employee Personnel Management Work Group, and that's a lot to say.

SPEAKER: Is there an acronym?

MR. FILLER: We can probably create one. And this was work being done by the Chief Human Capital Officer's Council working with representatives of the National Council on Federal Labor Management Relations. We have a draft out now that really touches on very important areas. And again, this is a perfect example of where reform need not be legislated.

We are using the Obama executive order -- which did much more, I think, than the Clinton partnership executive order -- with a focus on performance and improving government performance. And this paper that will be coming out in the next month or so will focus on a number of key areas. High-performing organizational culture, aligning individual performance with the organization, and a focus on accountability, engagement, and especially the selection of supervisors and the type of training and the development that they get. Because you know, being a subject matter expert doesn't mean you should necessarily be a supervisor, especially when we look to the future in dealing with the talent of the future. These are important things that we need to deal with.

As to changing the compensation system, I think until we get the performance management system corrected throughout the federal sector, we really can't go down the path of dealing with compensation. Because you've got to deal with

performance first and then compensation.

So we need to learn from our recent experiences. We need to rely not on Congress to improve the government, or recommendations of some expert commission. I think in the end, real civil service reform can only be accomplished by those who serve and protect the public.

Thank you.

MR. BALUTIS: I'm going to move quickly to questions as well, so please get yourself ready.

I just want to ask very quickly, though, of each of our panelists. Michael, I mean, you did focus much of your remarks on the issue of what can be done without -- in this reform arena -- without the involvement of Congress through legislation. Of course, Congress is often needed for other purposes. Either oversight or lack thereof, funding for initiatives, and so on.

Do you -- would you agree with the comment from the earlier panel that -- in terms of this area of reform right now, the scenario where Congress doesn't care? Do you share that view?

MR. FILLER: Well, I think there are people in Congress who do care, especially those who have oversight over the Department of Defense. I know they're very interested in what would be coming out of the work being done by the labor management groups.

They are, you know -- it's easy to gloss over statements about Congress. The good, the bad, and the ugly. I just think it's wrong to think that the only way to reform is through legislation. And I tried to point out today where I think, especially in the last two years, we are on the right path. Just give us the opportunity to succeed and labor can work with management. Engage front-line employees, and accomplish many of the

reforms that Congress and the President may be seeking.

So, the formula for success is there. I think you know, as we look to the future and see these reports that come out we will be able to implement those policy decisions. Because it's one thing to pass a policy or to enact a law. The hard part is to really make it a reality to implement those changes.

MR. BALUTIS: I certainly agree on that. I wanted to turn that question and issue, to some extent, over to you, Rob. You're in the Office of Personnel Management, but Director Berry has said himself on a number of occasions that it might better be called the Office of Personnel Recommendations.

So, you don't have a lot in the way of sticks and enforcement mechanisms and the like. How do some of these issuances and policies and changes that you're contemplating and hoping to drive -- how do you -- what's your thinking in terms of how do these actually get passed through in some meaningful way? Implemented in the agencies and drive to the kind of changes both you and the director have spoken to?

MR. SHRIVER: It's an issue that we have wrestled with a lot. There's only so much that you can dictate. There's only so much you can regulate.

We've been fortunate to have a President who has taken an interest in these issues and really does care about making the civil service more effective and efficient operation. So, it's been helpful to have a memorandum from the President to all the agencies saying, you must accept resumes. Sometimes it takes that. It's been helpful to have an executive order from the President saying, OPM, you have the authority to set up these internship programs. And then we have our regulations.

But again, you really can't regulate best practices. So what we rely on there is that there's a thirst for this kind of information out in the federal government that

the HR offices really want to do good work. They want to know what they could be doing to make things better.

We are running a pilot project for some new assessments that we've done. Some competency-based, online, un-proctored assessments that are meant to serve as a sort of first cut. And we had a lot of interest in that, and overwhelming participation in the pilot.

They don't have to do that. They can make their own assessments up. But they like to have access to these assessments that OPM has given its stamp of approval to. That's important.

So yes, the Office of Personnel Recommendations, that hits home, that is true. But I think what we're seeing is that there's a real openness across government to listening to what we've come up with. Taking advantage of our expertise in the area and trying to make changes that are consistent with what we think is the way to go.

MR. BALUTIS: I saw a question over here earlier. Sir?

MR. CASTILLO: Thank you. Hi, Andre Castillo from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Thank you all for your comments, I find them very enlightening and refreshing to hear.

I had a question specifically for Mr. Shriver about the Pathways regulations. And I understand that there's a comment period, and my department will be using that. But I figured I'd ask you all -- we had you.

And specifically about the public notice new requirement. And it seems to me that there might -- there is or may be some kind of expectation for competition for these appointments. So we -- as I understand it, we want to do what used to be a step in turn -- we want to fill that with someone in school who would convert once they fulfill the requirements. But now we have to post it on this OPM website, and then -- so that

anyone could see it. And I imagine they'd be able to contact us and compete.

And that -- I understand the rationale for that, but there also would be implications that could affect the way we do our own competition and assessment. For example -- I'll give you one example. Is, we have a lot of partnerships with diversity nonprofits like Hokus of the World. And we fell in a lot of -- it's fixed term internships through them, like for the summer. And then we -- and the ones that are the top performing ones we identify them for SCEP appointments or career track internships, which will now be called Pathways. And they keep them that way.

So there would be -- we would have to re-plan some things if we would then have to -- before we were able to do that, then post that on the OPM site for public notice. And so I just wanted to know, is that the thinking behind it? It wasn't inherently clear in reading the regulations.

MR. SHRIVER: The thinking behind it is that we want students who are interested in internships to be able to go on USA Jobs and figure out where there are opportunities. And figure out what they -- where they can go to get information about how specifically to apply for those internships.

So, the regulations as proposed do not require that agencies post the job opportunity announcement and run their application process through USA Jobs. As we've proposed, that would still be up to the agency consistent with its legal obligations under accepted service hiring to run its own recruitment, assessment, and selection process.

So all we've really done is lay on top of that a requirement that you put on USA Jobs, you know, these are the positions that we're looking to fill through the internship program. This is the number of jobs we may have, these are the locations, [click here for more information](#). And then wherever they go from that click, that's where

you guys take over and figure out what you want to do as far as your process.

MR. DAVIS: Hello, my name is Steven Davis, I'm a recent graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center and a 2011 Presidential Management Fellows finalist.

I had a question specifically for Rob Shriver. There obviously was a lot of turmoil this past year with, you know, the government shutdowns, the prospect of a shutdown and the prospect of a government default. What affirmative steps is OPM taking and what can, you know, the HR department in any federal agency take in anticipation of future government shutdowns or government defaults?

You know, from my perspective as a job applicant it looks like this kind of political brinksmanship isn't going to end any time soon. It's obviously very unsettling. So.

MR. SHRIVER: All we can do is be prepared for when those things come up to get as much information out as possible. When a government shutdown is a possibility, there are lots of questions that agencies have, that employees have about what the impact is.

And one of the useful exercises from the near shutdown in April was that we overhauled our website when it comes down to shutdowns. We have a whole section now that's devoted exclusively to what are called shutdown furloughs. And there are a number of questions and answers on there that are aimed at agency HR, the public, and employees. So we can prepare for that. We can prepare in the event of debt ceiling issues, if there's anything different. That we make sure that we have the information ready and available to provide to the public.

But we can't kind of change the way we operate based on the possibility that that may happen. We've got to chug along and keep doing what we're doing,

carrying out our mission, trying to make these changes across government, and stay focused on that. And when those challenges come up, they come up and we'll deal with them. We've dealt with them before. And really the most important thing from my perspective is being sure that the information we have is good information and that people who have questions can be comforted in knowing that when they come to the OPM website they can get the kind of answers they need to their questions.

MR. FILLER: Yeah, I would just like to add some commentary to say regardless of whether or not you're an intern in the Fellows Program or want to work for the government or not, please hold your elected officials accountable. Tell them that you don't like this nonsense, the brinkmanship, the continuing resolutions, and the like. Because people need to hear about that.

The fact that the government in general has very poor ratings, I would argue in large part is a result of the behavior of Congress and the inability of the legislative and executive branches to do the people's business. So you got to make your voice known, please.

MR. BALUTIS: It might also be helpful and instructive to note that over the past 55 or to 60 years -- I'm trying to think. I think there are only three years during that period of time where the government started its fiscal year with appropriations in place for all the agencies in government. So more often than not, there has been some form of continuing resolution for all or part of government for most of that period of time.

Now, that may speak to the abilities of Congress to actually appropriate it. It may mean, you know, the new normal is the old awful. I'm not sure what the -- quite. But some of these things that we seem to think are very stunning and unusual are, in fact, pretty common in terms of how our government operates, rightly or wrongly.

Other questions or comments? Thoughts? I saw this had first and then

we'll come down to you, please. Go here and then.

SPEAKER: Okay. This is for Mr. Filler, please. How are you working with your members in terms of the rank and file employees? How are they going to migrate over to the Pathways programs?

For instance, I'm a young person. I came out of high school; I got my first federal job at, say, 16, 17, 18. I'm not 25, I'm in college, and I'm interested in also some of the Pathways programs that Director Berry talked about.

I would like to know about some of -- what's your -- the union doing to assure some of the rank and file members and not necessarily the traditional college students have access to those opportunities?

MR FILLER: Well, as Rob indicated earlier, there are -- you know, a lot of viewpoints on this.

I don't know that we have one position of labor. I've not been involved in any of those meetings. But we do want to get the right mix of people. We need to both look at existing employees as well as bringing in new talent. And so, part of what we need to do in general is to communicate to the workforce about what those opportunities are. Because I think one of the primary goals of any labor organization is to make sure that the people that work there have a good workplace so that they can excel. And so that will continue to be one of our challenges as we move forward, you know, implementing these new regulations.

MR. SHRIVER: Yeah, I could just add to that a little bit and say that definitely the Pathways is an option for people who go back to school later on. We really value those folks who are making mid-career changes. People go back to college, like yourself. People go and get a masters degree. People are doing one job for 20 years; they decide they want to go to law school. All of you will be eligible under these

programs. So, certainly this is not just about getting those fresh out of college who have gone straight through to school. This is about anybody.

And also, let me emphasize it's not just about four-year college. These programs are open to people who go to community college, who go to technical schools and trade schools. We know that DoD has a very vigorous program with bringing people who are trained in the trades in. These programs are open to all of those under our proposed regulations.

MS. KLEIN: Hi, Andrea Klein, Family Voices of D.C.

I have a question with regard to the proposed reforms and the budgetary constraints and the atmosphere in Congress. What does OPM see with regards to the downsizing of the federal government and the impact with regard to the intern program and Pathways and so forth?

MR. SHRIVER: We're all waiting to see how the current budgetary situation is going to resolve itself, and we'll have to -- all the agencies will have to deal with that when it comes out.

But let me say that even in times of downsizing or shrinking federal workforces, you know we have 2.1 million civil servants. And there is turnover. And even when there are budgetary restrictions, there are job opportunities. You just have to look a little harder to find them.

And I think that the Pathways programs will be a valuable tool in that kind of environment. It's a way to bring on a balanced workforce as part of an overall strategy. You can have people who have 30-plus years who are mid-career and bring on inexperienced workers.

So, certainly there may be fewer opportunities. We'll have to see how the budgetary situation works out. But even if that's the case, I would encourage

everybody who is interested to continue to consider the federal government because the workforce is large, there is turnover, and that means there will be opportunities even in that environment.

MR. BALUTIS: Is your phone still -- we have time for, I think, a couple more questions if there are some. Want to follow up?

MS. KLEIN: Yeah, well this is a different question.

With regard to diversity it was mentioned in the earlier panels. Can you give us an idea of what that diversity pool is like with regard to some of the programs?

MR. SHRIVER: The diversity pool, you said?

MS. KLEIN: Yes.

MR. SHRIVER: So, I think the President's executive order is focused on a broad definition of diversity that includes, of course, sort of the traditional racial ethnicity, national origin, all of those characteristics. But also, diversity of experiences.

So, I think that -- and that's why inclusion is also a part of that executive order. We're looking at both diversity and inclusion, and a broad definition of those.

Certainly I think an important component of any diversity initiative is looking at how agencies are recruiting for talent. And making sure that they are recruiting a diverse pool of potential applications. And I'll just make a plug for our USA Jobs recruit website that we rolled out within the past year that's available to federal HR practitioners and hiring managers. And it has some tools on there that helps them design overall recruiting strategies that will help make sure that they wind up with diverse applicant pools in the end.

MR. BALUTIS: A last question? Okay, well we're finished with this panel but not with our session today. So, we have two more wonderful treats for you as part of the day.

The first of those -- and this weighty responsibility given to me of introducing lunch. So, lunch is going to be served right outside here. There will be staff to direct you to where you can pick up what I know to be a sumptuous meal. I think you can bring that back into this room if you like.

Given the fact that we're finishing just a little bit early I'd ask you to be back in here about 12:20 or so. And then we'll get going for the second remaining item. And that is President Mullen's keynote. I had a chance to meet and chat with him earlier. I think you'll enjoy hearing from him today.

So, thank you for your time this morning. Thanks to my panel members here and the insights earlier from the earlier session, and Director Berry. Please stay for lunch, stay for the keynote, and thank you for your time and attention this morning.

(Applause)

MR. GALSTON: Okay, if we could all take our seats, please so that we can reconvene for the final session of this conference on the federal workforce and attracting the most talented people our country has to offer to it.

We've spent the morning discussing what the federal government is in the process of doing to try to improve the attractiveness of public service. We talked about a number of reform options. We found out what the Office of Personnel Management is doing, what various departments in the agencies are doing. We heard a little bit about the political and institutional obstacles to the kinds of reforms we need.

That's a very important part of the story. But as we're about to be very forcefully reminded, it is only part of the story. There's a context for the story and there are other institutional actors, not only NGOs. We heard a fair amount about Teach for America this morning, for example -- in quite envious tones.

But there are also the institutions of higher learning in the United States

that provide enormous talent -- pools of talent from which the federal workforce of the future could, in substantial measure, be drawn. Whether it will be drawn from those sources is a different question altogether.

And the final speaker at this conference is very, very well-placed to elucidate and illuminate that question for us. He is James Mullen, who has served as the 21st president of Allegheny College, by that account. And he's served in that capacity since August of 2008.

He came to Allegheny after a distinguished career in academia and academic administration. Prior stints included the presidency of Elms College. He served as chancellor at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. And senior vice president of Trinity College as well.

Got a BA from Holy Cross, masters in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government, from which you've already heard this morning. And, a PhD from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

On a more personal note, Allegheny first came to my attention about a decade ago. I had just founded something called the Center for Institution and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement -- CIRCLE for short -- that focused on the civic and political life of young Americans. And I began noticing that we were getting a steady stream of inquiries and evidence of good work from something called the Center for Political Participation at Allegheny, led by a very dynamic and talented -- he's still very talented, not quite as young as he was when he first started getting in touch with me -- guy by the name of Dan Shay, if memory serves.

And under President Mullen's leadership, the themes of civic engagement and public service have been front and center at Allegheny. And thank you for keeping them there and underscoring them, because the civic function of higher

education in America, it seems to me, is crucial but much neglected. Particularly by major research universities.

James Mullen will talk with us today about the impact of things such as today's harshly polarized politics on young adult's attitudes towards civic life. And in addition to the gloom that the discussion of such a topic will inevitably produce, I hope that there will be a candle lit in the darkness as well.

So, Jim Mullen, the podium is yours. (Applause)

MR. MULLEN: Thank you very much, Bill. And it's a great honor to join such a distinguished conversation this morning, and I want to thank you and Brookings for making it possible.

I was thinking as I sat here this morning of a story that may be legend. But knowing the character involved, it also may be very true. And I think it reflects back to a far simpler time of hiring into government.

And it's a story that's told about the legendary governor Earl Long of Louisiana, who immediately after his election to governor saw on his calendar that two of his most ardent supporters were coming to see him. And when they came in his office, they were clearly agitated. And Governor Long said to them, what's the matter, fellas?

And the first said, Governor, this man is a liar. He told me that you have promised him that he will be the Commissioner of Agriculture for the state. And he's a liar because you told me I was going to be the Commissioner of Agriculture for this state.

And the other fella said no, he's a liar, Governor. Because you stood there, I remember, and looked me in the eye and said I would be the Commissioner of Agriculture. And in that simpler time of hiring, the Governor looked at them and said, well, fellas? I got to tell you. I lied to both of you. And I think that probably reminds us why we need a little bit more complex hiring system in government.

And I also this morning noted that Director Berry alluded to the moment that inspired so many of us to the love of public service. And that was John Kennedy's call to people -- young people in particular across the nation -- to believe in their potential and in their responsibility to serve. And to believe that there was almost a vocational worthiness in the life of government service. I can tell you for many of us who are Irish-Catholic from Massachusetts, in that time it became almost as virtuous to serve in government as it was to become a priest. And public service in all its forms was seen as honorable. Whether one was an elected official, a civil servant, or a political appointee.

And many of us know that a lot has happened since then. Vietnam, assassinations, Watergate, Monica Lewinsky, hanging chads, and the advent of a new era in political journalism, fueled by unimagined technology.

As the last century closed we watched young people -- we watched them pull back from politics. And the withdrawal was rapid, deep, and it was broad. Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone* summed up the issue this way: Very little of the net decline in voting is attributable to individual change and virtually all of it is generational.

And I think all of us agreed with Bill Galston when he wrote: The withdrawal of a cohort of citizens from public affairs disturbs the balance of public deliberation, to the detriment of those who withdraw and to the rest of us as well.

Thankfully, the political marketplace responded. By 2004, youth-centered political mobilization efforts were having a meaningful impact. Many of you in this room played a role in that process. And the results and enhanced political participation are relevant for our discussion today.

I would argue that youth voting rates are a valid proxy for assessing the overarching environment for your efforts. They are a basic measure of the core willingness of young people to consider public service.

Interest among young citizens swelled in the 2004 and 2008 elections. In 2000, election turnout for those under 30 was just 35 percent. But by 2008 it had increased to 51 percent.

Time labeled 2008 the year of the youth vote. Young people had rediscovered the power and the potential of politics. I fear, however, that it was a temporary surge.

The first indicators were the 2009 gubernatorial elections in New Jersey and Virginia. In both contests, young voters stayed home. Voters under 30 accounted for just 9 percent of voters in New Jersey, compared with 17 percent in 2008. And 10 percent in Virginia, down from 21 percent in 2008.

They also stayed home during the critically important special election to fill the Massachusetts Senate seat vacated by the passing of Ted Kennedy. As you all recall, this race was over the so-called 60th seat. On election date, turnout was high for a special election, a robust 54 percent. Yet, generational differences were stark. A turnout for those older than 30 was nearly 60 percent. But for those under 30, it was 15 percent.

By the 2010 midterm election it became clear that the youth engagement had, I fear, burst. Turnout for those under 30 declined, while turnout for all voters rose.

The gap between young and older voters once again was growing. So, how could this happen? What's going on with young voters?

Well, I can tell you -- and I know that you recognize -- that young people are not apathetic, nor are they indifferent. We know from campuses across the country -- I certainly know from mine -- and from a host of survey data that young Americans care very deeply. They're involved in their communities, they want social change, and they seek to make a difference. And they are.

So why are they, once again, turning their back to politics? I think it might be the disgraceful stew of invective that is now our political process. It is no great revelation to say that ours has become an uncivil, dysfunctional, and mean-spirited politics. That it is a zero sum game of winners and losers. That as a continuing contest in which each side of the partisan divide sees itself as right and the other as evil, uncaring, or worst of all, unpatriotic.

As Brookings' own EJ Dionne recently wrote: When politicians and their supporters believe that the other side is pursuing policies that would destroy all they cherish, compromise becomes not a desirable expedient but almost treasonous.

David Brooks wrote a wonderful column a few months ago that spoke to the essence of civility. Brooks wrote that civility comes, "from a sense of personal modesty and from the ensuing gratitude for the political process. Civility is the natural state for people who know how limited their own individual powers are and know, too, that they need the conversation." I believe we're losing that sense of modesty. That sense of gratitude, and that sense of understanding of the need for conversation.

We are becoming a nation wherein politics too often, we only want to speak to those we agree with. At the extremes, I find conservatives who only want to talk to conservatives. Liberals who only want to talk to liberals. With conservatives labeling liberalists as elitist and social engineers, and liberals talking about how narrow and selfish conservatives are.

At our worst, I fear we're becoming self-righteous. All-too ready to question the intelligence and the motives and the patriotism of the other side, much less see merit in anything our opponents have to say.

We're becoming a nation where compromise is no longer the foundation of our politics but a sign of weakness and a lack of character. In polling that Allegheny

College's Center for Political Participation carried out last year on the subject of civility. 52 percent of those polled said standing firm on principles is more important than the ability to find compromise positions.

Think about the implications of that finding. Our subsequent polling indicates that this number has only increased in recent months. This politics is feeding on itself, and as it does so I am convinced that it cannot but do grave damage to our future. And to everything this conference seeks to achieve, and to everything that young people who are committed to government seek to achieve.

Now you might say to me that it's really no worse than it's ever been. In her wonderful book, *Dirty Politics*, Kathleen Hall Jamieson reminds us that Timothy Dwight, who was president of Yale University at the time of Allegheny's founding in 1815 said that should Thomas Jefferson be elected, "we may see our wives and daughters the victims of legal prostitution, soberly dishonored, and speciously polluted."

I can tell you that at Allegheny we saw much more civil side of Jefferson, and I'll mention that in a moment. Lincoln. Lincoln was described as an ignoramus, a despot, and a butcher. Al Smith said his former friend, Franklin Roosevelt -- Roosevelt's New Deal would compel America to, "don the mask of Lenin and Marx".

So while such voices are not new, I would argue that technologies that power them have grown tremendously more potent. With the result that incivility has become a foundation for our political discourse. As Congressman Joe Cooper, who served in the House with distinction since 1982, has said, we have gone from Brigadoon to Lord of the Flies.

Now, I'm not arguing for a pristine environment in which no feelings are hurt or tough rhetoric employed. I'm not looking for perfection in how we act. No one in the arena is free of sin. No one is pure, no elected official, political consultant, or opinion

writer has a perfect record of civility.

What I am saying is that we need to understand our own moment in history and the implications of our behavior. Can we imagine younger generations over time remaining anxious to join this process?

Ours is a time when there are forces at play that reinforce and expand the impact of our incivility. In Jefferson's time, there was no 24-hour news cycle. During Lincoln's era, no Fox or MSNBC. During Roosevelt's presidency, no blogging, no e-mailing, no texting, and no tweeting.

With the extraordinary technologies and means of instantaneous means of communication available to us, technology is never envisioned by the founding fathers as they designed our model of governance comes a responsibility to reflect deeply about how we will engage each other in the rough and the tumble of our politics.

In our current national dialogue, we are falling far short in meeting that responsibility. And the result. The result is a diminishment of government and the people who serve in it. And that is wrong.

The incivility of our political rhetoric, the polarization of our politics, and the inability of elected officials to address the policy demands of our time is more and more turning young people away. And it is having a powerfully negative effect on the perception of government. Negative effect that spans the generations.

Just this week, Gallup polling indicated that 81 percent of Americans are dissatisfied with the way the country is being governed. 57 percent feel little or no confidence in the federal government's capacity to solve domestic problems. 53 percent have little or no confidence in the men and women who seek or hold elected office. And 49 percent of Americans believe that the federal government has become so large and powerful that it poses an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens.

I find that staggering.

The bottom line, according to Gallup is, "American's various ratings of political leadership in Washington add up to a profoundly negative view of government. Something that would seem unhealthy for the country to endure for an extended period."

I would respectfully argue that all the efforts discussed at this conference are destined to underachieve or even fail if we do not together -- and I underline "together" -- address the negative environment that exists today. And I would argue that we should begin by tackling the issue of incivility.

But now, the ray of hope. There is good news. There are still leaders who exemplify civility. There is a deep-rooted and discernable public desire for civility. There is opportunity to change the environment, but only if we resolve together not just to bemoan the situation but to do something about it.

And that is why Allegheny College established the Center for Political Participation. Focusing on research and programming related to participation of young people in American politics under the leadership of Dan Shay. And that's why over the past two years, Allegheny and the Center have focused on the issue of civility in American politics.

We are one of the oldest colleges in the nation. We have a rich history of civility, and we have been its beneficiaries. In the archives of our library rests a letter from Thomas Jefferson to our founder Timothy Alden commending Allegheny on its extraordinary library.

Jefferson told Alden that he hoped someday his University of Virginia would have a library to rival Allegheny's. And as my own demonstration of civility, let me say that Virginia has done quite well in that regard. (Laughter)

At Allegheny we believe we have a special responsibility to address an

issue of such generational importance. That as a liberal arts college it is appropriate that we take on the question of how we debate each other in an informed, passionate, and civil manner. We feel we have a special responsibility to help foster a political environment that will encourage young people to engage in the political process in all its guises, and seek to make difference through government service.

In a few weeks we will announce the recipients of the first Allegheny Award for Civility in Public Life. Our recipients will be from the political arena, the arena where elected officials and opinion writers meet in the day-to-day of politics and policymaking. They will be proudly partisan, passionate in their convictions, and civil in bringing those convictions to the fore.

In short, they will be worthy examples for our students and for young people across the nation. Examples that we hope will inspire young people to politics and to government service. And we can rest assured they will not be saints. That at some point in their careers they will have said something they now wish they hadn't about an opponent or about an idea.

But in the sum and substance of their careers and in this time of rampant incivility, they will stand as examples of how we should engage each other in this rough and tumble, and how democracy can work.

So, this is our opportunity. Critiquing incivility is important. But we will not change the environment unless we put just as much energy into lauding civility. Yet, such positive voices are almost absent in our political arena. We will try to do our part at Allegheny to help fill that void.

We will shine a bright light on civility, and we will call on others to do the same. And I will foreshadow to this group today that we intend to start our efforts by focusing on the unique opportunity of political journalists to reshape the debate.

And I want to thank one of those journalists, Brookings' own EJ Dionne. Both for serving on the advisory panel that's helped Allegheny in this process, and for the example that he has set of passion for politics, deeply-felt convictions, and civility in his views in the arena.

So there is hope. Our polling indicates that 95 percent of Americans believe that civility is important to the future of American politics. And 90 percent believe that it's possible for candidates to run for office in an aggressive but respectful way.

Disappointingly, our polling indicates that young people are considerably less-optimistic about these two issues than are older Americans. But that just underscores the importance of our work. At Allegheny, we seek to build on that sentiment, particularly among young people who are heirs to the political process.

The 2012 political campaign is underway, in case you haven't noticed. And if you expect that campaign to be one that inspires young people to engage the process, you're more optimistic than I am.

The challenge we face is not easy. The path we face is hard, and it's blocked by many entrenched interests and very many bad habits. But I would argue that the effort is not only worthwhile, it is indeed our responsibility to those who will follow us, including the young people in this room today.

Those of us who believe that we can have a politics that is vibrant and partisan and civil, who believe that government can function and make a difference for the good, and that we can have an environment that calls people to government service - each of us owes it to young people across the nation to fight the good fight.

Each of us in this room and beyond has a responsibility to change the dynamic of our political environment. Not as John Kennedy once said, because it's easy, but because it is hard. And because it is a generational responsibility as important as

any that we will face.

We owe it to our democracy, we owe it to public servants like David, and we owe it to every young person who will inherit our political process.

Thank you all very much. (Applause)

MR. GALSTON: Well, I'd like to thank President Mullen for an eloquent and eminently challenging address. And I hope that people in this room and people who will be watching and listening to his remarks outside this room -- who will probably number in the hundreds of thousands, by the way -- will think hard about what he said.

We have a few minutes left for questions and comments. And I'm going to step out of the moderator's role and just put a question to you.

This wasn't the case 50 years ago, and certainly not 100 years ago, but today virtually every participant in our nation's politics is at least the graduate of a 4-year college, if not more. So, the patterns of declining civility that you've traced in your remarks are being produced by people who have gone through our institutions of higher learning.

So, what went wrong?

MR. MULLEN: You know, I think that we at colleges and universities have done a fairly good job of encouraging the passion that young people bring about serving and making a difference.

I'm very proud. You know, at Allegheny 2,100 students last year did 51,000 hours of community service. I think we do a very good job of that. We have operations within our institutions that are devoted to that.

I think we have done a less-good job of talking about the political process and guiding people in that spirit that Kennedy encouraged. That they should be looking at how they can make a difference through elective office, how they can be making a

difference through government service. Students who graduate from Allegheny -- you brought it up this morning -- are going on and they're entering NGOs and they're entering the Peace Corps and they're entering Teach for America and they're becoming VISTA leaders.

I think we have not done as good a job at colleges and universities around the -- inspiring them to the full range of government service, public service. And I'm hoping that in some small way the work that Allegheny is doing will impact that dynamic and re-echo -- and echo that call that John Kennedy made so eloquently.

MR. GALSTON: So, questions or comments from the floor? We have about five minutes. Yes, please.

SPEAKER: Hi. I just wondered if you could give a little bit of a historical perspective -- maybe the two of you -- on when this may have started. Because it's my perception that the nonprofit sector where many students are -- idealistic students are going these days -- really mushroomed in the 1980s with the sort of drumbeat beginning that government was too big, that government was not the answer to our problems, that the grassroots was the answer to the problems.

So it isn't just an animosity toward government, it's a feeling that the solving of problems is somewhere else. And I wonder if you could speak to that and talk about that trend and whether it's been altogether a good trend or it needs to be recalibrated.

MR. MULLEN: I think that that trend did exist, and I think in many ways that was an understandable one. And I -- what I worry about is in recent years we've accelerated the trend away from government for the wrong reasons.

You know, one could make the argument that the things that happened in the '80s, there -- you know there was -- it provided a new different vehicle for young

people. And I think they reached out and embraced that.

What I'm feeling that is different is that this immense incivility that's taking place in our political system is taking students away from that commitment to government for the wrong reasons. And I think that that is a -- if we don't stop this trend, if we don't learn how to engage each other and debate each other and argue with each other in a manner that is civil and productive, then I can't imagine reversing the trend of young people saying, I want to make a difference but why that way?

MR. GALSTON: Well, a couple of responses. First of all, if you look at the broad swath of American history, one of the things that has always distinguished us as a democracy -- even from other democracies -- is the robustness and diversity of our institutions of civil society. You know, along side of interacting with, nurturing and supporting, and to some extent being nurtured and supported by the public sector.

And so to some extent what happened in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s represented the redressing of a balance that, for understandable reasons starting with the New Deal, World War II, the Cold War -- all of which were exigent circumstances that called upon government especially. You know, all of those reasons led, I think, to a tilt away from the consciousness -- call it the Tocquevillian awareness -- of what civil society could do to bring people together and to mobilize them behind solutions to important problems.

So far, so good. But the relationship between civil society and the public sector is not hydraulic. It is not the case that as one rises the other need decline. It is not a zero sum game. It can be positive sum or negative sum. And in the past decade or two, I think we've entered into a period in which that relationship has turned negative to the disadvantage of both.

It is distressing to me, personally, you know as a citizen and as a father

that civil society and NGOs should be seen as a refuge from official politics. That's not good for us. It may in some respects be the awful truth of our situation, but it's not good for us as a country. And it's not good for the practice of citizenship.

Which gets me to the second half of your question. Why has this happened? What is the history? Well, I've spent most of the past decade thinking almost monomaniacally about that same question. Because I've lived it, that's my life. Right? I mean -- you know, I came to political awareness as an adolescent when the world worked in one way. And now, here I am, a grey beard recently signed up for Medicare, and the world is an entirely different way.

And if I had a lot of time -- which I don't, because I'm mindful of the clock and my responsibilities -- I would give you an adequate answer to that question. Suffice it to say that 50 years ago there were common frames of reference for good and for ill that characterized our nation's politics. And to the extent that civility existed then or to the extent that it was greater than it is today, it in part reflected the existence of those common frames of reference.

In my adult lifetime, those common frames have progressively broken down. In foreign policy, first and foremost -- first. Then, just a few years after Richard Nixon famously declared that we're all Keynesians now, it ceased to be the case. You know, the stagflation of the 1970s destroyed that consensus and created the conditions for the rise of competing theories of how the economy works. And those competing theories are at the heart of our gridlock on fiscal and economic questions, even today.

Then of course in the realm of culture. There was on many of the cultural issues that we now debate passionately something like a conspiracy of silence. I'm not defending that, but it did take a wide range of intractable issues off the public agenda altogether. And it, therefore, did not create the basis for the kind of bitter

contestation over first principles of morals and even theology that we now see today in our public life.

And I'm not saying that the consensus politics of 50 years ago served our country perfectly in all respects. It did not. And the price of that form of consensus politics came to seem too high. And it was dismantled. It was destroyed. And for a long time, we enjoyed the upside of that liberation from a common frame that came to seem too narrow and too restrictive.

Now in the past 20 years, I think we've experienced in full force the downside. And that's where we are today. And in addition to all of the urgent tasks of governance and administration and public policy, it does seem to me that the intellectual task of the next generation is to try to recreate in some very rough and ready form enough of a shared sense of understanding -- of a common frame -- so that people from different political perspectives can see themselves once again as part of a shared enterprise.

And if that doesn't happen, then I'm afraid we're condemned to another generation of what we've endured in the past generation. Which is not just a tonal problem. Our inability to govern ourselves effectively is now endangering the survival of our republic, at least as a world leader.

And you know, I don't particularly feel like spending my retirement years watching the slow but steady decline of the country I love. And so, I'll -- you know, and I suspect I speak for Jim Mullen, too, that I intend to spend what's left of the time and energy that I have to -- you know, as one person to do what I can to ensure that doesn't happen.

But if you're asking me do I enter the fray with a great deal of confidence? No. On the other hand, I am mindful -- and this will be my closing word in

this conference. And indeed, the end of it.

That Eleanor Roosevelt -- rather, Adlai Stevenson once said of Eleanor Roosevelt that she would rather light a candle than curse the darkness. A wonderful, evocative summary of a life.

And I think in some ways that's where we all are, you know? I've spent a lot of time in my own scholarship describing the darkness. And you know, Jim Mullen has just finished describing how in his college, you know, he and colleagues have lit a candle.

Well, each of us has a candle to light somehow. And let's just do what we can, starting with improving the way our federal government operates. And then moving on to task of improving how our politics is conducted. That's the best answer I can give you, and it's woefully inadequate to the challenges we face. But that's where we are.

And unless you'd like a closing word, Jim --

MR. MULLEN: I think that's okay.

MR. GALSTON: I would like to close by thanking you for reminding us of the higher calling of our political life. Because mired as we are in the nation's capitol, it's very easy to keep our noses pressed firmly to the floor, if not too often the gutter. And I personally appreciate that and I think we all do.

So, I close by asking everybody to give President Mullen a well-deserved round of applause. (Applause)

MR. MULLEN: Thank you all.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

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