

## **NAFSR Position on Recent Developments regarding FS Employee Issues**

### **ORDER TO CONVERT CAREER FEDERAL JOBS TO SCHEDULE P/C**

President Trump has issued an [Executive Order](#) to change the jobs of thousands of federal employees from their career status to a new excepted service category called Policy/Career (P/C). This action strips employees of merit system job protections so they will be subject to politically motivated removal at any time with no right to appeal.

Within USDA Forest Service, this change will affect employees assigned to four position descriptions:

- “Deputy Director” under position description number 2NS259
- “Director, Legislative Affairs” under position description number 1FS061
- “Grants Management Specialist” under position description number FS6496
- “Operations Research Analyst” under position description number 331366

While the number of position descriptions identified is small, there may be many more employees assigned to these jobs who will be impacted by the change. The chilling effect on these “at will” employees could also negatively impact public trust in the nonpartisan public service work expected of the Forest Service.

NAFSR opposes these job changes. More than ever, we need experienced, independent federal employees who follow the law, speak truth to power, and do their jobs without fear of partisan reprisal.

### **FOREST SERVICE OFFERS VERA AND VSIP**

Forest Service announced it is offering separation incentives to employees in the form of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and voluntary separation incentive Payments (VSIP). This comes ahead of the agency reorganization that will move hundreds of positions across the country.

While we believe VERA and VSIP are a good first step prior to a major reorganization, we caution employees to carefully evaluate their personal situation and the benefits - and costs - of resigning or retiring, such as the need to continue federal health benefits (not an option if you resign) or plans to return to federal service within 5 years (must repay the VSIP).

The maximum incentive amount that agencies can offer is \$25,000, which is reduced considerably by income tax withholding. The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee advanced a bill in February that would raise the VSIP maximum amount to six months of a federal employee’s pay, but the bill has not yet been passed into law.

Visit the [NAFSR Employee Care](#) page with frequently asked questions on [VERA and VSIP](#).

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