

October 26, 2020

HON John McEntee
Director, Presidential Personnel
Executive Office of the President

Mr. McEntee:

This it to inform you that effective immediately, I hereby tender my resignation as Member and Chair of the Federal Salary Council. I do so with great regret, because while I am proud of the progress the Salary Council has made during my tenure, much work remains to be done. However, after seeing Executive Order 13957 issued by the President on October 21, 2020—which creates a new ‘excepted service’ for certain categories of career Federal employees—I have concluded that as a matter of conscience, I can no longer serve him or his Administration.

There is some irony in this. On its surface, the President’s Executive Order purports to serve a legitimate and laudable purpose...that is, to hold career Federal employees ‘more accountable’ for their performance. That is something that I have spent most of my professional life—almost four decades in Federal service (over 20 as a member of the Senior Executive Service)—trying to do. However, it is clear that its stated purpose notwithstanding, the Executive Order is nothing more than a smokescreen for what is clearly an attempt to require the political loyalty of those who advise the President, or failing that, to enable their removal with little if any due process.

I simply cannot be part of an Administration that seeks to do so...to replace apolitical expertise with political obeisance. Career Federal employees are legally and duty- bound to be nonpartisan; they take an oath to preserve and protect our Constitution and the rule of law...not to be loyal to a particular President or Administration. I took that same oath, and despite being a life-long Republican (I was even named after Ronald Reagan), I would like to think that I lived up to it, even as I served three Democratic and three Republican Presidents. Yet the President’s Executive Order seeks to make loyalty to him the litmus test for many thousands of career civil servants, and that is something I cannot be part of.

To some, requiring that loyalty may seem entirely appropriate. After all, shouldn’t all employees do what the boss and his lieutenants tell them to do? I say no, at least not when it comes to career civil servants. The only ‘boss’ that they serve is the public, and the laws that their elected representatives enact...whether this or any President likes it or not. And if a President doesn’t like it, he can propose that the Congress change the law. That is the way our Constitution is supposed to work, and no President should be able to remove career civil servants whose only sin is that they may speak such a truth to him.

Accordingly, please accept my resignation. I thank the President for the opportunity to serve these almost three years, but I cannot in good conscience continue to do so.

Sincerely,



Dr. Ronald Sanders

cc: HON Michael Rigas, Acting Director
US Office of Personnel Management