

In 2003, I joined then Office of Personnel Management, OPM, Director Kay Cole James in announcing the creation of OPM's SES Candidate Development Program. This program was created to address the lack of minority representation in the SES. Yet last July, when I attended the program's first graduation ceremony and saw few minority graduates, I realized that much more had to be done to effectively change the racial and the gender make up of the SES.

Diversity is valuable because it can bring a wider variety of perspectives and approaches to policy development and implementation. Minorities and women need to be at the table contributing when strategic planning, problem solving and decision making is taking place. Our ideas and talents can help strengthen an organization and lead to the achievement of results. That is not really happening today. What I see as I visit Federal agencies is a senior level workforce that is not reflective of the diverse people we serve.

As chairman of the House Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia, I held a hearing in May of this year on diversity in the SES. It was after that hearing that I began to meet with the Federal minority groups represented here to effect change that would help diversify the SES. The subcommittee met extensively with these groups and what we heard was that it was not a lack of training, experience, or minorities in the feeder pool that caused the lack of diversity in the SES. What we heard was that there are flaws in the selection process, and that there is a lack of oversight and accountability when it comes to promoting and hiring minorities in the SES. The Senior Executive Service Diversity Assurance Act aims to fix all of that.

The act establishes SES evaluation panels that are charged with reviewing the qualifications of all candidates for career reserve vacancies. The evaluation panels must be a diverse group consisting of three members. One must be a member of a racial or ethnic group and one member must be a woman. The panel will forward the names of the most qualified candidates to the Executive Resource Board.

In addition, the act establishes the Senior Executive Service Resources Office, SESRO, within OPM. The purpose of the SESRO is to ensure that the Senior Executive Service is reflective of the Nation's diversity and to establish and maintain records, to the extent possible, on the race, ethnicity, gender and disabilities of employees in the SES. This bill aims to create an environment where diversity will flourish. And where it does not, Congress will have the tools and information to hold agencies accountable.

Diversity of gender, ethnicity, age and disability, as well as diversity of education, thinking, and experience are crucial if the Federal workforce is to mirror the communities we live in and serve. To stay competitive in an increasingly global economy and recruit the best and brightest workforce, diversity is an issue that we must pay close attention to. All Americans want to work for organizations where they have the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills, develop their careers and be promoted to the highest levels. The Senior Executive Service Diversity Assurance Act is

going to give ethnic minorities and women that opportunity; an opportunity that does not broadly exist today.

Please see the attached Washington Post article dated October 5, 2007, entitled, "Bill Pushes Diversity Among Senior Executives."

(By Stephen Barr)

Legislation to promote diversity in the government's career executive ranks was introduced yesterday by the chairmen of the House and Senate federal workplace subcommittees.

Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-Ill.) and Sen. Daniel K. Akaka (D-Hawaii) said their bill would address the lack of diversity in the Senior Executive Service, the group of about 6,300 career executives who manage the day-to-day operations of the government.

The bill would establish a Senior Executive Service program office in the Office of Personnel Management. The proposed office would collect and maintain data on the race, ethnicity, gender and any disabilities of people who have been certified as qualified to serve in the SES.

The bill also would require federal agencies to establish SES evaluation panels to review the qualifications of applicants for SES jobs. Each panel would have three members. One must be a woman and one other a member of a racial or ethnic minority group.

"We are doing this really to try to bring about some improvement in the management of the Senior Executive Service and to enhance diversity," Akaka said.

Davis said "diversity is valuable because it can bring a wider variety of perspectives and approaches to policy development and implementation. Minorities and women need to be at the table to contribute when strategic planning, problem solving and decision making take place."

Davis added, "What I see as I visit federal agencies is a senior-level workforce that is not reflective of the diverse people we serve."

Reports by the Government Accountability Office show that "the numbers of women and minorities are low in the SES," Akaka said. Davis said the reports "documented a poorly diversified SES."

Of the 6,349 career SES members, the most recent GAO tally counted 325 African American men, 221 African American women, 164 Hispanic men and 65 Hispanic women.

That demographic profile of the SES, which was released in May, also showed there were 90 Asian-Pacific Islander men, 56 Asian-Pacific Islander women, 59 American Indian/Alaska native men and 27 American Indian/Alaska Native women.

The overwhelming majority of SES members were white—3,900 white men and 1,436 white women.

The GAO tally also included six as "unspecified."

Davis, an African American who represents a Chicago district, and Akaka, a Native Hawaiian, said they want the OPM to track the racial, ethnic and gender diversity of the SES because a significant number of federal executives will soon retire. The OPM estimates that 90 percent of federal executives will be eligible to retire over the next 10 years.

However, a GAO analysis in 2003 suggested that the projected turnover in the SES "will not result in greater racial diversity," Davis said. "While there are numerous minorities in the pipeline ready to be promoted, too few are being given the opportunity to advance."

Leaders of employee groups were on hand for yesterday's announcement to show support for the legislation.

They included William A. Brown Sr., president of the African American Federal Executives Association; Jose Osegueda, president of the National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives; Carson K. Eoyang, executive director of the Asian American Government Executives Network; Rhonda Trent, president of Federally Employed Women; and Darlene H. Young, president of Blacks in Government.

Carol A. Bonosaro, president of the Senior Executives Association, issued a statement in support of increasing diversity in the SES. Bonosaro, who was attending the funeral of a SES member, said her group was pleased to see the bill consolidates policy and program management of the SES at OPM.

An OPM spokeswoman said the administration is reviewing the Davis-Akaka proposal.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF JEANIE BELL WINSLOW

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 9, 2007

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Mrs. Jeanie Bell Winslow on the occasion of her retirement after 40 years of dedicated public service to the Federal Government.

Mrs. Winslow began her career in federal service as a travel agent for the United States Army Audit Agency, where she was responsible for arranging official passenger travel, both domestic and international. In 1981, she spent 2 years at the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) learning about all modes of transportation as an intern for the Department of Army. After her internship, she was assigned to the Directorate of Personal Property at the MTMC for whom she managed military/industry symposiums and councils, and played a key role in responding to White House and congressional inquiries. While at the MTMC, Mrs. Winslow was also responsible for managing standard agreements with airline, air taxi and rental car companies who provide service to the Department of Defense. She managed the Federal Government's rental car program and represented the MTMS on various General Services Administration panels that sought to evaluate bids for the city-pair contract.

Since joining the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC), Mrs. Winslow has managed their annual training symposium and Quality Award and Excellence in Transportation Awards Program, as well as legislative affairs and trade publications. As a result of her efforts, the SDDC's award-winning Translog magazine has doubled in issue size to 44 pages. Mrs. Winslow will retire as the Acting Director of the Command Affairs Office at the SDDC.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Jeanie Bell Winslow for her years of service and dedication to the Federal Government. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Winslow on her retirement and wishing her the best of luck in all future endeavors.