

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2014

Katherine Archuleta, Director
Office of Personnel Management
Theodore Roosevelt Federal Building
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Director Archuleta:

We write to express our concern that outdated federal retirement processing methods are severely delaying delivery of services and continue to waste millions of taxpayer dollars every year. It takes OPM an average of 61 days to complete the retirement process for one person—the same amount of time it took in 1977. For almost 30 years, the modernization process has encountered a cycle of attempts and failures because of repeated project mismanagement and a lack of proper oversight. This is unacceptable for the over 5 million active and retired federal employees who rely on timely and accurate processing of their retirement benefits.

In a recent *Washington Post* article, you emphasized that modernizing the federal retirement process is a priority. According to last May's U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) testimony, OPM's numerous efforts to overhaul federal retirement processing have been unsuccessful, either through mismanagement or incompetence. Over the last 30 years, OPM has aborted its own modernization efforts because of a lack of planning and accountability. The result of these failed efforts has been significant cost to the taxpayer with virtually nothing to show for it. For example, in 1987, \$25 million was spent on an automation project that had virtually no oversight, and a project manager with no idea whether the system was even capable of working. In early 2008, another failed attempt cost taxpayers over \$106 million. This egregious waste at OPM needs to stop.

Therefore, we request that you describe your plans to modernize the federal retirement process and continue to apprise us of the agency implementation of your stated goals. According to OPM's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, OPM plans on "investing in information technology tools and solutions" to handle federal retirement case management and workflow. Modernization efforts must not only include moving away from a paper-based system, but also include new systems and methods of input in order to keep pace with developing technologies.

We intend to monitor OPM's progress in modernizing the federal retirement process and are committed to ensure the agency succeeds in its efforts. Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to continued communication about the OPM's progress on this project moving forward.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



Ron Johnson
United States Senator