

S. Hrg. 107-133

THE NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE HUMAN CAPITAL CRISIS

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JOINT HEARING  
before the

OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT,  
RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
of the  
COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND AGENCY ORGANIZATION  
of the  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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MARCH 29, 2001  
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Senator Voinovich. Senator Carper.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARPER

**Senator Carper.** Thanks, Mr. Chairman. To our witnesses today, welcome. We are delighted that you are here. We thank you for your testimony and for your service to our country. I want to thank the Chairman for inviting our friends from the other end of the Capitol to join us here today and give me a chance to hook up with Connie Morella, Representative Morella, who my wife and I met 15 years ago this year on our honeymoon in Jamaica. So it was nice to have that little reunion here, as well.

I apologize for missing your testimonies. I have a couple of other hearings going on this morning and I am trying to attend all of them. I missed what you said. If you have already addressed this, I am going to ask you, just for me, to repeat it.

Governor Voinovich and I used to be governors before we were Senators, and we are people who believe in the States as laboratories of democracy and the idea that we are actually interested in devolving some things back down to the States and figure the States can do better some things that we actually do here at the Federal Government.

What I would ask, just to start off with, are you aware of some practices that some of the States are following with respect to attracting and retaining exemplary employees, whether it is in the technology fields that Ms. Norton was touching on or some others? Are you aware of any best practices out there in the States where we could look to those States as models that we might emulate? Any one of you?

Admiral Train. It does not come to mind in our work.

**Senator Carper.** All right.

Mr. Hinton. Senator, I think that is part of the solution to the strategic planning process. I think part of that goes to once you know your requirements and your gaps, you need to learn the experiences of others and how they are tackling similar problems, and if they are having success, we in the government need to find ways to replicate that success across the different agencies, from a lessons learned standpoint, and I think probably the government has got some good lessons to share, the States too, and the local counties. We do not yet have a pretty good inventory of what those successes are. I think that effort is a positive. That is a good step that we need to be really conscious of.

**Senator Carper.** Thank you. In the National Governors Association, we had a number of entities. The Governors Association existed in part to lobby the Congress and the President on behalf of the States. We also had a Center for Best Practices which we used to gather the best practices from the various States, whether it is dealing with increasing home ownership or whether the issue is trying to reduce recidivism or to encourage people to move off of welfare, to raise student achievement. We had our Center for Best Practices and gathered those good ideas and tried to make them available to the other States on a user-friendly basis.

Do we have the ability--are you aware if we have the ability, whether it is in the Department of Defense or in the Federal Government, where we are able to gather best practices within not the States necessarily but within Federal agencies?

Mr. Hinton. Yes, sir. In the---

**Senator Carper.** And to share in a user-friendly way those best practices?

Mr. Hinton. Yes, sir. In GAO, we have done that across a lot of our audit teams. An area that comes to mind is the acquisition of major systems, where we have gone out as part of our research and looked for those best practices, and then once we have those, go back into the executive agencies and compare them to their practices, and where we can see that there is merit in following the best practices, we have adopted some of those recommendations.

In DOD's case, we think there are some good practices out there that they could use in acquiring weapons systems that they ought to follow unless there is a compelling national security reason not to do so. It will save money, it will get the job quicker, and I think that it will also let them know if the path they are going down will get them where they need to go. And we have used that technique widely in GAO.

Admiral Train. We have a database that is called a Joint Unified Lessons Learned database where--but they are mostly operational and do not deal with administrative or policy matters. But yes, there is such a database. Whether or not that branches off into

such matters as we are discussing today, how to better hire better civilians into the Department of Defense civilian structure, I am not sure whether that is covered. But there is a database for other things. It could be adapted to that, I suppose.

**Senator Carper.** Thank you. Yes, sir?

Mr. Lieberman. I believe a lot of that is done in clusters of organizations and managers who are in the same business area. For instance, the audit community within Defense shares ideas on recruiting and personnel management things, as does the Federal law enforcement community. But I do think more of that can be done in this specific area. We were talking in terms of people not understanding what authorities they already have. There has been an awful lot of duplicate research to figure out what those authorities are all over the Department. So we probably could do better if we could make that more systematic.

**Senator Carper.** Mr. Chairman, my pager is going off here. It is trying to tell me something. Do we have a vote in progress?

Senator Voinovich. Mine has not gone off yet.

**Senator Carper.** My wife is saying, do not forget that bread and milk tonight coming home. [Laughter.]

Can I ask one more question, just a quick one?

Senator Voinovich. Certainly.

**Senator Carper.** Thanks. One of the great values I found over the years in a hearing like this is to find where our speakers, our witnesses agree, and let me just ask if you would each just give me one idea where you think you agree on something we ought to do this year--this year--to address the problems that we have talked about today, just one idea where you think you agree. Each of you give me one idea, if you would, on an approach to help us address these problems this year.

Mr. Hinton. I think that there is agreement that the human capital issue has gone unattended for many years in the government right now and I think there is agreement amongst the work that we have done, the Commission has done and other studies, is that it needs to be a priority within the Executive Branch to start addressing it, and from GAO's point of view, that begins with strategic planning as you look to your future needs, and I think that is a very key, fundamental point that needs to occur.

But it cannot occur unless you have got the commitment that starts with the President down through the secretaries, and that they are on board and are going to move in that direction. Because what happens is sometimes there are competing policy issues that move things to the side, though not intentionally, but they lose that sense of priority that needs to be done, and I do not think that we can wait any longer.

I think all the studies point in one direction. Enough of this has been studied. It is time to act. To use the term from the McKinsey study that was done at the Department of State, there is a war on for talent and that talent is the folks that we need to bring into the workforce, particularly into State and DOD. It is our front-line defense and we have got to be prepared for what the future brings and we cannot wait much longer for that to be left unattended.

**Senator Carper.** Thank you. Our other witnesses, one idea that you agree on.

Admiral Train. The President should propose and Congress should pass a National Security Science and Technology Education Act with four sections: Reduced interest loans and scholarships for students to pursue degrees in science, mathematics, and

engineering; loan forgiveness and scholarships for those in these fields entering government or military service; a national security teaching program to foster science and math teaching at the K through 12 level; and increased funding for professional development for science and math teachers.

**Senator Carper.** Terrific. Thank you. The last word?

Mr. Lieberman. I think both the White House and the Congress should demand that senior managers in the Executive Branch use whatever flexibilities they have now or whatever additional flexibilities are authorized and be accountable for getting on top of this civilian workforce problem.

**Senator Carper.** Thank you.

Mr. Scarborough. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I have enjoyed this first hearing. It has been very informative and important. I am honored to be sitting next to you. I have heard you called Governor and Senator, Mr. Chairman, and, of course----

**Senator Carper.** Mayor.

Mr. Scarborough. I was going to say, one of his great accomplishments was becoming mayor and just stopping the river from catching on fire. [Laughter.]

I mean, that was awe inspiring for all of us. But you are eminently qualified because you have done it on the municipal level, you have done it on the State level, and now you are looking at the situation up here.