



Lawmakers Urge Panetta to Cancel Workforce Freeze Plans

By FederalDaily Staff Jul 18, 2011

A group of senators is urging Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to back off of current plans to freeze the number of civilian employees at the Defense Department at fiscal 2010 levels, and instead to proceed based on cost and workload.

The request came in a letter from Sens. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio).

The senators said that freezing the workforce would result in new work being performed by contractors, even if the work is “inherently governmental.”

“I believe we can and must find greater efficiencies in the Pentagon, and I hope Secretary Panetta will continue that effort,” McCaskill said. “That said, we need to be smart about how we do it by looking at places like service contracts and poor acquisitions practices — like not doing it arbitrarily on the backs of federal employees who are performing core governmental functions.”

“Ensuring that essential department functions are performed by federal employees must be a part of the department's workforce management plan under any budget conditions,” said the letter, which was released July 7. “Certain federal jobs — like reviewing contracts, making budgets and writing policies — are simply too important to agencies' missions to ever be contracted out.”