

JOSH HARDER
10TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
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January 25, 2022

Kiran Ahuja
Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E St NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Director Ahuja,

Thank you for your leadership of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). I write today to strongly urge that you appoint a Chairman of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee (FPRAC) as soon as possible so the hardworking Veterans Administration (VA) healthcare providers and other federal workers serving in my Congressional District can receive the salaries they are due.

As you know, the FPRAC is responsible for establishing recommendations related to changes to the locality schedule, however, it is unable to meet and review changes without a Chairman. OPM is responsible for appointing a Chairman to FPRAC, a key step in allowing Congressional Districts like mine to advocate for a change in the wages its federal workers receive. This review is particularly important for Stanislaus County, as the federal workers are at a disadvantage when it comes to competitive pay in the region since it's included in the "Rest of United States" General Schedule locality.

For example, for our veterans, the nearest VA hospital is in San Francisco. This compounds issues of care as first, our veterans must travel hours to access care for serious health challenges and second, it encourages healthcare providers to work in areas like San Francisco, rather than the Central Valley. The "Rest of United States" designation does not promote equitable access to care for our Central Valley veterans and pay for our healthcare providers as the cost of living is very similar to surrounding counties that are included in the San Francisco locality. At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is heading into its third year, healthcare providers are more important than ever. Providing the proper pay and incentives to ensure they are ready to provide services to our veterans will help address the shortage of providers I see in my District every day and get veterans faster access to care.

To begin the locality schedule review process for my Congressional District, we need a FRPAC Chairman appointed as soon as possible. To assist us in understanding the timeline for this process, please provide the answers to the following questions:

- What are the specific steps that OPM will take to appoint a Chairman to the FPRAC?
- When can we expect a Chairman to be appointed to the FPRAC?

- What is the expected timeline for FPRAC to begin reviewing requests for a change to a region's General Schedule locality?

I look forward to your timely attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Harder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Josh" and the last name "Harder" clearly distinguishable.

Josh Harder

Member of Congress