

.....
(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the impact of Federal reductions in force on constituent services, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. PETTERSEN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the impact of Federal reductions in force on constituent services, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Constituent Services
5 Impacts of Federal Workforce Firings Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Many Federal agencies provide essential
2 constituent services, including processing benefits,
3 responding to casework inquiries, administering
4 grants, conducting outreach, and maintaining public
5 facing operations.

6 (2) Federal reductions in force may signifi-
7 cantly alter agency staffing levels, affecting the de-
8 livery of constituent facing services across the Fed-
9 eral Government.

10 (3) Workforce reductions may increase service
11 backlogs, lengthen processing times, reduce access to
12 in person or telephone assistance, and diminish the
13 overall responsiveness of agencies to constituents.

14 (4) Reductions in force may disproportionately
15 affect agencies with high volumes of public inter-
16 action, including those administering Social Secu-
17 rity, veterans benefits, immigration services, tax ad-
18 ministration, and disaster assistance.

19 (5) There is currently no comprehensive Fed-
20 eral assessment of how reductions in force affect
21 constituent services, service delivery performance, or
22 the ability of agencies to meet statutory and mission
23 critical obligations.

24 (6) During and after a reduction in force, agen-
25 cies may be unable to provide timely information or

1 case specific responses to Members of Congress or
2 congressional staff, impairing the ability of Congress
3 to assist constituents in resolving issues involving
4 Federal programs.

5 **SEC. 3. GAO STUDY ON IMPACT OF REDUCTIONS IN FORCE**
6 **ON AGENCY CONSTITUENT SERVICES.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the
8 United States shall conduct a comprehensive study on the
9 impacts of reductions in force on constituent services pro-
10 vided by Federal agencies.

11 (b) SCOPE OF STUDY.—Such study shall examine, at
12 a minimum—

13 (1) changes in constituent service performance
14 metrics following a reduction in force, including—

15 (A) processing times for benefits, claims,
16 and applications;

17 (B) casework responsiveness and resolution
18 rates;

19 (C) call center wait times and service avail-
20 ability; and

21 (D) public facing operational capacity, in-
22 cluding field office hours and staffing;

23 (2) impacts on service backlogs and delays
24 across agencies with significant constituent inter-
25 action;

1 (3) effects on agencies ability to meet statutory
2 deadlines or mission critical service obligations;

3 (4) operational and administrative challenges
4 faced by agencies in maintaining constituent services
5 during and after a reduction in force;

6 (5) differences in impacts based on—

7 (A) size and scale of the reduction in force;

8 (B) geographic distribution of affected em-
9 ployees; and

10 (C) agency mission, service volume, and
11 workforce composition;

12 (6) historical case studies of significant reduc-
13 tions in force occurring within the previous 20 years
14 and their effects on constituent services;

15 (7) strategies used by agencies to mitigate serv-
16 ice disruptions; and

17 (8) the extent to which reductions in force im-
18 pede agencies' ability to respond to congressional
19 casework inquiries, including situations in which
20 agencies cannot provide necessary information for
21 Members of Congress to assist constituents.

22 (c) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study, the
23 Comptroller General shall seek to consult with—

24 (1) Federal agencies with substantial con-
25 stituent service responsibilities;

1 (2) the Office of Personnel Management;

2 (3) labor unions representing Federal employ-
3 ees; and

4 (4) public administration experts, service deliv-
5 ery researchers, and workforce analysts.

6 (d) DATA SOURCES.—The study may use administra-
7 tive data, surveys, performance metrics, economic mod-
8 eling, and publicly available service delivery statistics.

9 (e) GAO REPORT.—

10 (1) DEADLINE.—Not later than 18 months
11 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
12 Comptroller General shall submit a report on the
13 study conducted under subsection (a) to—

14 (A) the Committee on Oversight and Gov-
15 ernment Reform of the House of Representa-
16 tives;

17 (B) the Committee on Homeland Security
18 and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

19 (C) the Committee on Education and the
20 Workforce of the House of Representatives; and

21 (D) the Committee on Health, Education,
22 Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

23 (2) CONTENTS.—The report shall include—

24 (A) findings and analysis from the study,
25 including—

1 (i) an assessment of how reductions in
2 force affected constituent service delivery
3 across agencies;

4 (ii) identification of agencies experi-
5 encing the greatest service disruptions;

6 (iii) evaluation of whether reductions
7 in force improved or impaired agency effi-
8 ciency; and

9 (iv) recommendations for statutory or
10 administrative changes to strengthen con-
11 stituent service continuity during work-
12 force reductions;

13 (B) projected short term and long term
14 impacts of reductions in force on constituent
15 services;

16 (C) policy options for Congress to consider,
17 including potential Federal assistance, coordina-
18 tion mechanisms, or service continuity planning
19 tools to address any identified delays in con-
20 stituent services resulting from reductions in
21 force; and

22 (D) an evaluation of how a reduction in
23 force-related staffing shortages affected agen-
24 cies' ability to respond to congressional case-
25 work inquiries and provide information nec-

1 essary for Members of Congress to assist con-
2 stituents

3 (3) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Comptroller
4 General shall make the report publicly available on
5 the website of the Government Accountability Office.

6 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act—

7 (1) the term “constituent services” means serv-
8 ices provided by Federal agencies, including proc-
9 essing benefits, responding to casework inquiries, ad-
10 ministering applications, providing public informa-
11 tion, responding to inquiries and requests from Con-
12 gress, and maintaining public facing operations; and

13 (2) the term “reduction in force” means a re-
14 duction in force under subchapter I of chapter 35 or
15 section 3595 of title 5, United States Code, or any
16 other significant downsizing of Federal civilian em-
17 ployees.