



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

FEB 28 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Immediate Civilian Hiring Freeze for Alignment with National Defense Priorities

I direct a civilian employee hiring freeze as part of efforts to streamline operations, bolster readiness, and prioritize critical missions within the Department of Defense (DoD). This aligns with President Trump's direction to streamline the Federal workforce and to make the Federal Government more efficient and responsive.

Effective immediately and for the duration of this freeze, no vacant civilian position may be filled, and no new civilian positions may be created, unless approved by me. It is my expectation that there will be no onboarding starting with the pay period beginning Sunday, March 2, 2025, unless I approve an exemption to do so. I will consider exemptions for positions essential to immigration enforcement, national security, and public safety, and positions which support such functions. The Service Secretaries and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)) hold the authority to deny an exemption request at their level. DoD Component requests for exemptions should be submitted to USD(P&R) who will issue additional guidance on submitting exemption requests.

A vacant position may not be converted to performance through contracted services to circumvent the hiring freeze, and DoD Component heads will review contract actions to ensure that contracts are not being used for this purpose. I will hold DoD Component heads accountable for decisions on such actions.

I expect strict adherence to this memorandum. This action is part of a broader effort to ensure that DoD remains mission-focused and fully capable while remaining accountable to taxpayers. DoD will faithfully and rapidly implement the President's workforce optimization initiative,¹ and will determine civilian reductions based on a comprehensive readiness impact analysis on the size and appropriate mix of the Total Force.

PBJ
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¹ Executive Order 14210, "Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency' Workforce Optimization Initiative," February 11, 2025