

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 1, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

We first want to state that we, like many Americans, have been encouraged by both your words and your actions to assist the president-elect with the transfer of power and to ensure that he and his administration are prepared to lead the country on day one.

Because we know that you are sincere in overseeing a smooth transition, we hope members of your administration will resist the urge to accelerate the hiring of career civil servants who may not share the priorities of the new administration. There is no doubt that thousands of dedicated civil servants faithfully serve in positions across the federal government without regard to who occupies the White House. However, it would be unfair to those employees, and to the American people, if they are joined by others who may not be willing to properly execute the policies of the new administration.

Additionally, another activity practiced by both Democratic and Republican administrations in the past is the one called “burrowing in,” when a political appointee moves in, or “converts,” to a career civil servant position. Since early 2001, more than 300 political appointees have completed this transition. Not only is “burrowing in” unfair to applicants without an inside connection, it further contributes to the possibility that federal workers may attempt to undermine the policies of the new president.

We respectfully encourage you to consider the aforementioned concerns and also consider the implementation of a hiring freeze on all career civil servant positions, except those that involve public health or safety, until the end of your term. Doing so not only will be a gesture of bipartisanship and goodwill, we hope it also will set a precedent for future presidential transitions.

Mr. President, thank you again for your dedicated service to our great nation.

Sincerely,



Senator Ron Johnson
Chairman, Committee on Homeland
Security and Governmental Affairs



Thom Tillis
United States Senator