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Democracy Forward Fact Sheet: Trump's War on the Federal Workforce Harms Veterans and Military Spouses

The Trump Administration's deliberate strategy to drive out and sideline expert career civil servants to make room for unvetted, unqualified political loyalists disproportionately harms veterans and military spouses—individuals who have already sacrificed for our nation and deserve our unwavering support.

Veterans and military spouses represent a significant portion of the federal workforce. Of the 2.3 million federal employees, veterans account for 30%, including many disabled veterans, whose service and sacrifices are recognized through hiring preferences that support their transition into meaningful federal careers. Military spouses, who face unique career challenges due to frequent relocations, depend on special hiring authorities to secure stable employment and maintain careers despite the demands of military life.

Under the Biden Administration, critical progress was made to support these communities. The launch of the first-ever [Governmentwide Military-Connected Strategic Plan](#) marked a historic step forward. This plan expanded hiring authorities for military spouses and promoted flexible workplace arrangements such as telework and remote work, which are essential for spouses balancing frequent relocations and family responsibilities. Additionally, in September 2021, Biden's Office of Personnel Management finalized [a rule](#) to enhance federal agencies' ability to hire military spouses through noncompetitive processes, ensuring greater access to federal employment opportunities. The now-revoked [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Executive Order](#) (EO 14035) further strengthened equitable hiring and workplace practices, benefitting veterans and military spouses, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.

However, the Trump Administration has dismantled many of these advances, eroding the stability and opportunities veterans and military spouses depend on. By rescinding EO 14035, the Administration erased critical protections and initiatives that fostered equitable opportunities for these communities. Hiring practices that support veterans and military spouses have been overridden, weakening the pathways that prioritized their access to federal jobs. Key provisions of the Military-Connected Strategic Plan, such as telework and remote work options, have been rolled back, stripping military families of the tools they need to maintain career stability and balance the unique demands of military life.

These harmful actions threaten to undo decades of progress, resulting in fewer veterans and military spouses employed in federal roles. The rollback of workplace flexibilities and supportive hiring practices will make it significantly harder for military families to achieve the balance and stability they deserve. The people who serve our country in the armed forces, and the spouses who sacrifice to support them, deserve better.

Policymakers, advocates, and the public must come together to resist these attacks on veterans and military spouses in the federal workforce. The progress made to support these communities must not only be preserved but expanded, ensuring that their contributions to our nation are honored with meaningful opportunities and unwavering support.