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To: David C. Childs A-76comments/OMB/EOP@EOP
cc: rachelschneider@bellsouth.com
Subject: Major Revisions to Circular No A-76, Privatizing government jobs

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December 8, 2002

Mr. David C. Childs:
Office of Federal Procurement Policy
NEOB Room 9013
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

RE: Major Revisions to Circular No. A-76, Privatizing government jobs.

Dear Mr. Childs:

As a concerned citizen, I am submitting my comments on the proposal to place 850,000 government jobs up for competition by private contractors.

I strongly oppose all revisions to the A-76 process. It is a myth that the private sector can always out-perform government. There are numerous examples of privatization in recent years in national parks, military installations, schools, prisons, etc. where results are mixed at best. Many are outright failing even while they are being subsidized in some way other than paid contract, by state and federal governments. We have even learned with the current A-76 process sometimes contractors bid low on a job to the point of sustaining a short-term loss only to raise their price in later years once there are no civil service employees left to do the work. It ends up costing taxpayers much more money.

The deadline to complete the cost of performance studies, and the consequences of not meeting the deadlines are unrealistic and totally unacceptable. Competitive outsourcing has not been

widely publicized in the media or through official channels. These people have been kept in the dark. Most employees are not even aware of what is about to happen, its impact on them, the impact on government and the security of this Nation if this ruling is passed. Communication on this issue has been shrouded in vague language and acronyms the public and most government employees are unfamiliar with unless they work in procurement or contracting. Activities identified under the FAIR Act as inherently governmental have not been widely shared with federal employees much less the opportunity to actively participate in these management decisions. This is not right. It is not fair and it is a disgrace.

Jobs that exist in the government are inherently governmental. The government is not a business. The purpose of government is to accomplish a mission rather than make a profit. Certain activities are contracted now where commercial accomplishment is advantageous to the government and in-house resources either do not exist or are not sufficient to get the job done. These are usually short-term jobs not activities requiring honoring the public interest. Federal employees and agencies are very concerned with financial management and have given countless unpaid hours to get the work done year after year of budget cuts. This would not happen in the private sector. It is ridiculous to operate on the presumption that all activities are commercial thus subject to outsourcing.

Such an experiment will severely diminish quality, and mission accomplishment of the agency.

Management Agendas come and go with each administration. Civil service employees provide stability, continuity and keep the government running no matter who is in office. Over a lifetime, these employees are paid less than their private-sector counterparts for the trade off of job security; reliable benefits and most regard their careers as a calling not just a job.

The economy is in recession. Unemployment is at its highest in eight years. Extremely well qualified, energetic, healthy, young people are losing their jobs by the thousands in almost every sector. Companies that are still hanging on are not very likely to hire older, displaced federal employees with old degrees, who have spent their careers working for the government. Clauses to appease federal workers, such as the federal employee will have the right of first refusal if the contractor is hiring, are worthless. The contractor will just not have any openings.

Outsourcing 850,000 federal jobs is contrary to the reason the Civil Service Commission was established. Prior to the establishment of the Civil Service Commission, the patronage or spoils system of employment was used to accomplish the work of the government. Presidents were hiring friends, campaign contributors and the administration's special interests for civil service jobs at all levels down to the rural mail carrier. There was no competition for jobs, only political appointments. This resulted in corruption and even the assassination of President Garfield. Opening civil service jobs to contractors provides unprecedented opportunities for the return to this 19th century system.

Since September 11, 2001, National Security has become a priority issue. Outsourcing federal jobs would give virtually complete access to every system, facility, and function designed to protect our citizens to who knows whom. Federal employees have had background checks, we know, see and trust our colleagues every day. Not so with contractors. There are far more less

costly, and better ways to control the quality of work with a government employee than with a contractor.

I want you to publish my response in the Federal Register. I want you to notify all federal agencies one year in advance of any decision by your agency. I want all federal employees notified of the extent and breadth of this competitive outsourcing initiative.

Sincerely,

Rachel G. Schneider

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