

The Training Aspiring Leaders Emerging Now to Serve (TALENTS) Act

Introduced by Senator Andy Kim (D-NJ) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR)

BACKGROUND

Since its founding in 1977, the Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) Program has been a flagship leadership development program at the entry level for advanced degree candidates. After a competitive and rigorous process, a cohort of a few hundred individuals are placed in government agencies each year, bringing fresh ideas, efficiency, and leadership to federal agencies.

For decades, Democrat and Republican administrations have relied on the Program to attract thousands of the best early career professionals into public service, providing a ready source of talent needed to reshape the federal workforce into the efficient, citizen-forward organization that the American people have come to expect. At the end of their two-year fellowship, many Fellows go on to become high-ranking Federal officials.

On February 19, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order, [Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Government](#), which directed the Office of Personnel Management to terminate the PMF Program. Its termination weakens our ability to recruit top talent to solve our country's toughest challenges and develop exceptional individuals into the federal government's next leaders.

THE TALENTS ACT

The *TALENTS Act* is a comprehensive overhaul of the federal government's leadership development pipeline. Specifically, the legislation would:

- Codify the PMF Program to ensure the federal government can continue to attract outstanding individuals from various academic disciplines and career paths who are interested in and committed to excellence in the leadership and management of public policies and programs.
 - Applicants must have obtained a graduate degree or master's certificate within the last two years or be on track to complete one by August 31 of the application year.
 - Once placed, Fellows will receive a two-year federal appointment under Schedule D of the excepted service and, depending on their qualifications, be placed at the GS-09, GS-11, or GS-12 levels.
 - During their service, Fellows will be considered to be in a trial period, not a probationary period one.

- Ensure that participating agencies provide Fellows with more than 80 hours of formal training each year, access to leadership development activities, agency-specific onboarding, mentorship, and opportunities to move between agencies.
- Provide pathways for Fellows who successfully complete the Program with opportunities for conversion to a permanent or term position within the employing agency or, if such a position is unavailable, at a different agency.
 - Fellows would be informed no later than 30 days before the completion of the Program whether they would be converted.
- Codify the Federal Executive Boards in 28 major metropolitan areas to strengthen interagency cooperation outside Washington, D.C.
- Require the Director of OPM to submit a report to congressional committees at least once every three years highlighting the Program's impact, challenges, and recommendations for improvement.