

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2022

The Honorable Kiran Ahuja
Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415-1000

Director Ahuja,

We have received reports of unacceptable delays in the processing of retirement paperwork for retirees from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). These delays have resulted in months of uncertainty and financial hardship for some of America's finest, many of whom spent decades putting their lives on the line to keep their fellow citizens safe.

While the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) website indicates that federal employee retirement processing takes around 60 days¹, in a recent briefing to the House Oversight and Reform Committee OPM staff indicated that retirement processing times across the federal government average between 88 and 90 days. However, recent CBP retirees have reported waiting as long as 13 months for OPM to process retirement paperwork and begin payments of full monthly annuities. Although these retirees receive a partial annuity payment during processing and are paid a lump sum catchup payment once paperwork is completed, the uncertainty surrounding delays and around how partial annuity payments are calculated makes it impossible for individuals to plan for retirement. Retired agents have reported receiving annuities as low as 11% of the total they were entitled to, with others receiving closer to 50% of their full annuity while they waited months for processing. These challenges are compounded by the fact that Americans are dealing with historic levels of inflation, exacerbated by this Administration's policies.

Efforts by our offices to assist constituents experiencing these challenges have been met with silence by OPM. Efforts to reach OPM congressional liaisons by phone and by email have gone unanswered, and the OPM congressional portal provides congressional staff with no information about the status of cases submitted.

Federal employees, especially those who have risked their lives for this country, deserve better. Please provide answers to the following questions by November 30, 2022.

1. What is the current processing time for CBP retirement paperwork?

¹ <https://www.opm.gov/support/retirement/faq/applying-for-retirement-benefits/>

- a. What was the average processing time for CBP retirement paperwork prior to March of 2020?
- b. What was the average processing time for CBP retirement paperwork from March of 2020 through May of 2021, when CBP's webpage was last updated?
2. How does the processing time for individuals retiring from supervisory positions compare to those who served in non-supervisory positions?
3. What is the current backlog of unprocessed retirement paperwork for CBP employees?
4. What factors have contributed to the increased processing delays?
5. Has OPM resumed full in-person staffing levels at OPM's Retirement Operations Center in Boyers, PA?
 - a. If not, when will OPM resume full in-person staffing levels at the site?
6. What steps is OPM taking to expedite processing of retirement paperwork for CBP retirees?
7. Why does OPM issue partial annuity payments instead of full annuity payments?
8. What factors are considered when OPM determines amounts for partial annuity payments for CBP retirees?
9. What steps will OPM take to improve responsiveness to congressional casework inquiries?
10. Please provide a breakdown of current retirement paperwork processing times government wide, broken down by employing agency.

We look forward to your response to this inquiry.

Sincerely,



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Nancy Mace
Member of Congress



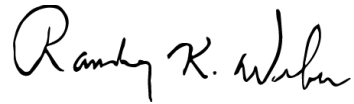
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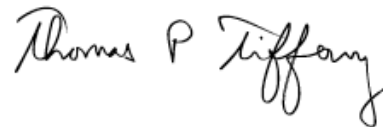
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