

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 11, 2022

The Honorable Kiran Ahuja
Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20415

The Honorable Shalanda D. Young
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20503

The Honorable Robin Carnahan
Administrator
General Services Administration
1800 F St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Director Ahuja, Director Young, and Administrator Carnahan:

We are writing to express our concerns about the lack of federal agency work plans to transition federal workers back to in-person operations. We respectfully request that you take effective and safe action to transition federal agencies back to the physical workplace to ensure they can adequately serve the public.

We recognize the vital services that federal workers provide to the American people, and we maintain that the health and safety of those employees are a priority. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges that required our nation's workforce to adapt to slow the spread of the virus. More than two years later, widespread vaccines, testing, and safety measures have resulted in a dramatic decline in COVID-19 cases and deaths. As a result, the private sector and schools have reopened and it is time for the federal government to do the same.

We also recognize that a transition to the post-reentry work environment involves extensive communication with employees and their union representatives. We urge that these progress expeditiously. We were encouraged by the President's National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan directing federal agencies to resume in-person operations by April 2022. President Biden reiterated this call for federal agencies to return to normal in his State of the Union address. However, most agencies have yet to publish their work plans, and many federal employees are still working remotely. While we appreciate and encourage the federal government providing employee flexibility and increased telework capabilities, the Administration must ensure that these do not undercut the essential, in-person services that federal agencies provide to the public.

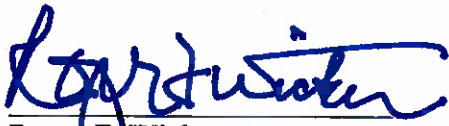
Over the last year, Members of Congress have repeatedly raised concerns that constituent issues remain unaddressed. On February 16, 2022, we introduced the RETURN Act to require federal agencies to submit a comprehensive plan to resume in-person operations and address constituents' concerns about federal government services.

President Biden and Congress have repeatedly directed federal agencies to return to in-person work. Notably, Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-21-25 outlined procedures for the safe return of federal workers and required agencies to submit reentry plans. Despite these directives, most federal agencies have not complied and published their work plans. As a result, many of our constituents, particularly those in rural communities and areas without broadband, lack adequate access to federal services.

It is time to reopen all in-person essential services for the benefit of the American public.

We are grateful for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Charles Grassley
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator