

# National Federation of Federal Employees

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO  
1016 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 202/862-4400 202/862-4432 (Fax)

Richard N. Brown, President/DBR

John M. Paolino, Secretary-Treasurer

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January 12, 2004

Honorable Henry A. Waxman  
House of Representatives  
2204 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Waxman:

I am writing to you regarding a national security concern that has been brought to my attention by members of National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) Local 1998. That Local represents 420 Passport Specialists whose primary function is to review and approve passport applications. The strict performance quota placed on these employees does not allow them adequate time to perform their responsibility with the attention to detail it mandates.

Requiring employees to rush to meet performance quotas increases the likelihood of errors occurring. Some fraudulent applications are easy to detect, while others have more subtle clues; indicators that are missed when insufficient time is provided to review each application. While Passport Specialists (the title of those individuals who adjudicate passports) take great pride in their work, quality declines as quantity demands are increased.

These employees are not challenging performance expectations out of a desire to lessen their workload. They can meet any volume requirement placed upon them. They simply want to be allowed enough time to perform their mission with the care and diligence it deserves.

A "Western Hemisphere Passport Requirement" is currently being contemplated by the Department of State. This will increase production from 7 million to 15 million passports issued each year, forcing employees to spend even less time per application. The situation must be corrected now, and Passport Specialists must be allowed to devote an adequate amount of time to each application they review, before the problem becomes more serious.

Employee representatives have repeatedly approached Management with their concerns regarding this issue and have yet to make any real progress. It is imperative that action be taken now, before the situation becomes even more critical. On behalf of my brothers and sisters at NFFE Local 1998, and in the interest of the American people, I am asking Congress to investigate this issue to help ensure the integrity of the passport issuance process.

Fraternally,



Richard N. Brown  
President / DBR  
NFFE DF1-IAMAW  
AFL-CIO