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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-167710

November 14, 1979

The Honorable Abraham A. Ribicoff
Chairman, Committee on Governmental Affairs *SEN 06600*
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This responds to your request of October 30, 1979, for our comments on H.R. 5176, the General Accounting Office Personnel Act of 1979 a bill to establish an independent personnel system for employees *GAO* of the General Accounting Office.

HSE 02900 This bill was originally introduced on March 29, 1979, as H.R. 3339 in the House of Representatives by Chairman James M. Hanley of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, at our request. Its primary purpose is to give the General Accounting Office as much independence from the executive branch as is feasible - an independence which we have long believed is essential to insure the integrity and effectiveness of the work we do in assisting the Congress with the oversight of executive branch programs.

During the consideration of this legislation in the House of Representatives we worked extensively with members of the staff of the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service and of the Subcommittee on Civil Service to make certain that in achieving this desired independence we did not jeopardize the benefits or rights of our employees. We believe that the revised bill, H.R. 5176, introduced by Subcommittee Chairwoman Patricia Schroeder and passed by the House of Representatives on October 15, 1979, adequately serves the needs of the General Accounting Office and at the same time fully protects its employees. *HSE 02900*

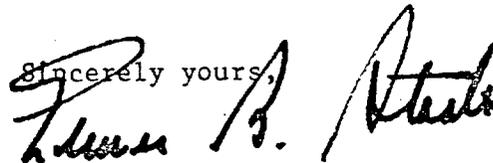
Similar legislation, S. 1879, was introduced at our request in the Senate on October 11, 1979, by Chairman John Glenn of the Subcommittee on Energy, Nuclear Proliferation, and Federal Services, *SEN 06600* Committee on Governmental Affairs. That subcommittee held hearings on that bill on October 16, 1979. We understand that the Subcommittee on Civil Service and General Services under the chairmanship of Senator David H. Pryor is also considering S. 1879.

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We strongly endorse the enactment of this legislation, and we respectfully urge that the Committee on Governmental Affairs favorably report it to the Senate as soon as possible. If we can be of any assistance in this regard, please let us know.

A copy of this letter is being sent to Senator Glenn and Senator Pryor.

Sincerely yours,


Comptroller General
of the United States