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United States Government Accountability Office  
Washington, DC 20548

January 12, 2009

The Honorable Danny K. Davis  
House of Representatives

Subject: *U.S. Postal Service: Age and Disability Diversity in the Executive Service*

Dear Mr. Davis:

Equal opportunity in the federal workplace is intended to result in a diverse and highly qualified workforce. Such a workplace uses the talents of all employees—without regard to factors such as employees’ race, ethnicity, gender, and disability status. Diversity within an agency’s senior executive ranks, including the U.S. Postal Service’s (Service) Postal Career Executive Service (PCES), is particularly important because it allows agencies to draw upon a wider variety of perspectives and approaches to address the wide array of challenges facing the federal government. The Service had 959 employees in the PCES during fiscal year 2000 and 867 PCES employees during fiscal year 2007.<sup>1</sup>

In April 2008, we reported on the demographic representation of employees in the Service’s PCES (which includes postal officers and executives) and certain levels of the Service’s Executive and Administrative Schedule (a pool of candidates for the Service’s managerial and executive leadership positions). We provided these data for the end of fiscal year 2007, as well as baseline data from fiscal year 1999, which we previously reported for those positions.<sup>2</sup> As requested, this report provides additional information on the demographic representation of employees who were in the PCES at any time during fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2007. Specifically, this report provides information on (1) the average age at which these employees entered the

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<sup>1</sup>Data on the universe of PCES employees in this report differ from data in the Service’s fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2007 comprehensive statements. According to these statements, there were 859 PCES employees as of the end of fiscal year 2000 and 748 PCES employees as of the end of fiscal year 2007. The number of PCES employees identified in this report are higher than those published previously principally because, for this report, we have included everyone in the PCES during fiscal years 2000 and 2007—not just those on board as of the end of each fiscal year. See U.S. Postal Service, 2000 Comprehensive Statement on Postal Operations (Washington, D.C., 2001) and U.S. Postal Service, 2007 Comprehensive Statement on Postal Operations (Washington, D.C., 2008).

<sup>2</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: Diversity in the Federal SES and Senior Levels of the U.S. Postal Service and Processes for Selecting New Executives*, [GAO-08-609T](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 3, 2008); and U.S. Postal Service, *Diversity in the Postal Career Executive Service*, [GAO/GGD-00-76](#) (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 30, 2000).

PCES;<sup>3</sup> (2) the average age at which these PCES employees left (separated from) the Service, including the average age at which they retired; and (3) the number of PCES employees who reported having one of nine disabilities that the government, as a matter of policy, has identified for special affirmative action emphasis (“targeted” disabilities).<sup>4</sup> This report also provides information on, among other matters, the average length of tenure that employees had with the Service prior to entering the PCES as well as their average length of tenure in the PCES before separating from the Service.

To address our reporting objectives, we obtained data from the Service on the 1,826 employees in the PCES at any time during fiscal years 2000 and 2007.<sup>5</sup> We specifically analyzed data on, among other factors, the employees’ (1) race, ethnic group, and gender; (2) date of birth; (3) date of appointment to the PCES; (4) date hired by the Service; (5) date of separation from the Service and the reason for the employees’ separation, where applicable; and (6) disability status if reported by the PCES employee. We used these data, as applicable, to calculate fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2007 data for each of our reporting objectives. We also interviewed postal officials and performed electronic testing for obvious errors in accuracy and completeness to ensure the reliability of the Service’s data and determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report. Because of the relatively small number of PCES employees affected by various employment actions such as appointments to, and separations from, the PCES in either fiscal year 2000 or fiscal year 2007, we generally reported data on each demographic group in aggregate form to protect the individuals’ privacy. For the same reason, we did not report data on employees in demographic groups of less than three employees or break-out data on employees in the Services’ officer ranks (PCES II). We conducted our work from August 2008 to January 2009. A more detailed description of our scope and methodology, including the exclusion of 239 employees (230 in fiscal year 2000 and 9 in fiscal year 2007) because of incomplete data, is contained in enclosure I of this report. The Service provided technical comments on a draft of this report. We incorporated the comments as appropriate.

## In Summary

- Employees onboard during fiscal year 2000 were, on average, about 44 years old when they *first entered* the PCES, while those who were on board during fiscal year 2007 were, on average, about 1 year older at their original appointment to the PCES. In addition, the 87 employees, who *entered* the

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<sup>3</sup>An employee may enter the PCES as an outside hire or, if employed by the Service, be promoted (appointed) to the PCES. In this report, we use the terms “entered” and “appointed” to designate the point at which an individual first became a PCES employee.

<sup>4</sup>The nine targeted disabilities are deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis convulsive disorders, mental retardation, mental illness, and the distortion of a limb and/or the spine.

<sup>5</sup>As previously noted, 959 of the 1,826 employees were in the PCES during fiscal year 2000 and the remaining 867 were in the PCES during fiscal year 2007.

PCES in fiscal year 2007 were, on average, about 2 years older at their appointment than the 97 employees who *entered* in fiscal year 2000.

- The average age of the 47 PCES employees who *separated* from the Service in either fiscal year 2000 or fiscal year 2007, was about 54.5 years in fiscal year 2000 (10 separations) and about 55.6 years in fiscal year 2007 (37 separations)—an increase of about 1.1 years. Retirements accounted for 35 of the 47 separations. The average age, at *retirement*, for these 35 employees increased from about 55.9 years (6 employees) to about 56.6 years (29 employees) between fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2007—an increase of about 0.7 years.
- Two of the 959 PCES employees on board during fiscal year 2000 reported a condition that constituted a *targeted disability*, whereas none of the 867 PCES employees on board during fiscal year 2007 reported a *targeted disability*. An individual with a *targeted disability* has at least one of nine specific physical and mental conditions, including deafness, blindness, and mental illness. Another seven PCES employees reported having a disability in fiscal year 2000, while eight reported a disability in fiscal year 2007. However none of the conditions they reported constituted a targeted disability. Twenty PCES employees chose not to provide information on their disability status in fiscal year 2000, followed by 22 who chose not to disclose this information in fiscal year 2007. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, employees governmentwide may not report these data due to concerns that such a disclosure will (1) preclude them from employment or advancement, (2) subject them to discrimination, or (3) not remain confidential.

## Background

The Service's senior executive rank, the PCES, has two levels. PCES II is composed of the Service's most senior leadership—its officers—and includes the Postmaster General, the Deputy Postmaster General, and the Service's vice presidents. PCES I includes all other executives in headquarters, area, and district locations. According to the Service and as we reported in April 2008,<sup>6</sup> there were a total of 748 employees in the PCES as of the end of fiscal year 2007. Thirty-nine of the 748 PCES employees were officers (PCES II), while the remaining 709 executives were PCES I.

The Service, like federal agencies, requests its employees to self-report whether they have a physical or mental disability (reportable disability) that substantially limits one or more of the employees' major life activities (e.g., caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, or learning). According to the Service's form 2489 for reporting disabilities, the Service uses its employees' information to measure its progress in hiring, placing, and advancing disabled employees.

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<sup>6</sup>GAO-08-609T.

A portion of the reportable physical and mental disabling conditions listed on form 2489 are considered “targeted disabilities”—conditions that the government, as a matter of policy, has identified for special affirmative action emphasis. There are nine targeted disabilities: deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, convulsive disorders, mental retardation, mental illness, and the distortion of a limb and/or the spine. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which collects and maintains statistics for targeted disabilities reported by employees, recognizes that other disabling conditions may be as severe, or even more severe, than some targeted disabilities. According to the Commission, the government focuses on targeted disabilities to encourage the hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with disabilities in affirmative action planning.<sup>7</sup>

### **Average Age at which Employees during Fiscal Years 2000 and 2007 Entered the PCES**

As shown in table 1, PCES employees during fiscal year 2000 were, on average, nearly 44 years old when they first entered the PCES, while those who were on board during fiscal year 2007 were, on average, about 1 year older at their original appointment to PCES. The average age at appointment increased between fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2007 by a range of about 0.6 years (Hispanic/Latino males) to 2.3 years (Asian/Pacific Islander males) for five of the eight demographic groups for which we have reportable data. The average age at appointment for employees in the PCES during fiscal year 2007 decreased slightly for Hispanic/Latino females (0.2 years), while Black/African-American males and Asian/Pacific Islander females were about 1 year younger than those PCES employees (in the same demographic groups) who were on board during fiscal year 2000.

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<sup>7</sup>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, *Improving the Participation Rate of People with Targeted Disabilities in the Federal Workforce* (Washington, D.C., January 2008). The Commission reported that it first officially recognized the term “targeted disability” in its Management Directive 703, which was adopted on Dec. 6, 1979.

**Table 1: Demographic Data on the Average Age at Original Appointment—All PCES Employees On Board during Fiscal Years 2000 and 2007**

Demographic group	Average age at appointment to the PCES				Change in age (FY 2000 to FY 2007)
	FY 2000		FY 2007		
	Number	Average	Number	Average	
Black/African-American males	72	46.2	77	45.2	-1.0
Black/African-American females	43	44.2	51	45.8	1.6
American Indian/Alaska Native males	1	<sup>a</sup>	1	<sup>a</sup>	N/A
American Indian/Alaska Native females	3	40.6	0	0	N/A
Asian/Pacific Islander males	8	40.5	11	42.8	2.3
Asian/Pacific Islander females	5	46.7	13	45.6	-1.1
Hispanic/Latino males	37	44.8	43	45.4	0.6
Hispanic/Latino females	5	44.0	16	43.8	-0.2
White males	421	43.8	477	45.4	1.6
White females	134	43.2	168	44.0	0.8
Unspecified/other	0	0	1	<sup>a</sup>	N/A
<b>Total PCES</b>	<b>729<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>858<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

Note: “N/A” means that the change in age was not calculated to either protect individuals’ privacy or because such a calculation was not applicable for this demographic group.

<sup>a</sup>Data omitted to protect individuals’ privacy.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes 230 employees due to incomplete data. Enc. I provides the reasons for these exclusions.

<sup>c</sup>Excludes 9 employees due to incomplete data. Enc. I provides the reason for these exclusions.

As shown in table 2, the 87 employees who entered the PCES in fiscal year 2007 were, on average, about 2 years older at their appointment than the 97 employees appointed in fiscal year 2000. The data indicate wide variability between aggregated demographic groups, however, ranging from a high of about 3 years older at appointment (white males and all whites) to a low of more than 4 years younger (minority males)<sup>8</sup> than those PCES employees (from the same demographic groups) who were appointed in fiscal year 2000.

<sup>8</sup> The term “minority” refers to people in the following racial and ethnic groups: Black/African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latino. These groupings are consistent with those used in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s most recent report on the federal work force.

**Table 2: Aggregated Demographic Data on the Average Age of PCES Appointments—All Employees Appointed to the PCES in Either Fiscal Year 2000 or Fiscal Year 2007**

Aggregated demographic group	Average age at appointment to the PCES				Change in age (FY 2000 to FY 2007)
	FY 2000		FY 2007		
	Number	Average	Number	Average	
All males	58	48.2	61	49.9	1.7
White males	46	47.4	52	50.4	3.0
Minority males	12	51.3	9	47.0	-4.3
All females	39	45.5	26	47.5	2.0
White females	30	45.7	18	48.1	2.4
Minority females	9	45.0	8	46.1	1.1
All whites	76	46.7	70	49.8	3.1
All minorities	21	48.6	17	46.6	-2.0
<b>Total PCES</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

As shown in table 3, the average years of tenure in the Service prior to appointment to the PCES increased by about 1.4 years, from about 16.4 years for employees in the PCES during fiscal year 2000 to about 17.8 years for employees in the PCES during fiscal year 2007. The average years of tenure prior to appointment increased between fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2007 by a range of 0.5 years (Hispanic/Latino males) to about 10.9 years (Hispanic/Latino females) for all but one of the eight demographic groups for which we have reportable data. The only exception relates to Black/African-American males appointed in fiscal year 2007. According to these data, employees in this demographic group had, on average, about 2 years less tenure at appointment to the PCES than Black/African-American males in the PCES during fiscal year 2000.

**Table 3: Average Years of Tenure with the Service at Appointment to PCES, by Demographic Group—All PCES Employees On Board during Fiscal Years 2000 and 2007**

Demographic group	Average years of tenure with the Service at appointment to the PCES				Change in tenure (FY 2000 to FY 2007)
	FY 2000		FY 2007		
	Number	Average	Number	Average	
Black/African-American males	72	20.9	77	18.9	-2.0
Black/African-American females	43	18.4	51	20.2	1.8
American Indian/Alaska Native males	1	<sup>a</sup>	1	<sup>a</sup>	N/A
American Indian/Alaska Native females	3	14.3	0	0	N/A
Asian/Pacific Islander males	8	9.6	11	12.4	2.8
Asian/Pacific Islander females	5	12.6	13	17.2	4.6
Hispanic/Latino males	37	19.8	43	20.3	0.5
Hispanic/Latino females	5	4.8	16	15.7	10.9
White males	421	16.0	477	17.8	1.8
White females	134	14.8	168	16.6	1.8
Unspecified/other	0	0	1	<sup>a</sup>	N/A
<b>Total PCES</b>	<b>729<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>858<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>1.4</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

Note: "N/A" means that the change in tenure was not calculated to either protect individuals' privacy or because such a calculation was not applicable for this demographic group.

<sup>a</sup>Data omitted to protect individuals' privacy.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes 230 employees due to incomplete data. Enc. I provides the reasons for these exclusions.

<sup>c</sup>Excludes 9 employees due to incomplete data. Enc. I provides the reason for these exclusions.

As shown in table 4, the 87 employees who entered the PCES in fiscal year 2007 had, on average, about 20.1 years of tenure with the Service, while the 97 employees who were appointed in fiscal year 2000 had about 21.4 years of tenure—a decrease of about 1.3 years.

**Table 4: Aggregated Demographic Data on the Average Years of Tenure with the Service Prior to PCES Appointment—All Employees Appointed to the PCES in Either Fiscal Year 2000 or Fiscal Year 2007**

Aggregated demographic group	Average years of tenure with the Service prior to appointment to the PCES				Change in tenure (FY 2000 to FY 2007)
	FY 2000		FY 2007		
	Number	Average	Number	Average	
All males	58	22.2	61	20.5	-1.7
White males	46	20.9	52	20.6	-0.3
Minority males	12	27.3	9	19.5	-7.8
All females	39	20.2	26	19.2	-1.0
White females	30	20.0	18	20.0	0.0
Minority females	9	21.0	8	17.3	-3.7
All whites	76	20.5	70	20.5	0.0
All minorities	21	24.6	17	18.5	-6.1
<b>Total PCES</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>-1.3</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

**Average Age at which PCES Employees during Fiscal Years 2000 and 2007 Separated from the Service**

As shown in tables 5 and 6, the average age of the 47 PCES employees who *separated* from the Service in either fiscal year 2000 or fiscal year 2007, was about 54.5 years in fiscal year 2000 (10 separations) and about 55.6 years in fiscal year 2007 (37 separations)—an increase of about 1.1 years. Retirement accounted for 35 of the 47 separations.<sup>9</sup> The average age, at *retirement*, increased—from about 55.9 years (6 employees) to about 56.6 years (29 employees) between fiscal years 2000 and 2007—an increase of about 0.7 years.

<sup>9</sup>The remaining 12 employees separated from the Service through, among other actions, resignations, involuntary separations, and death.

**Table 5: Aggregated Demographic Data on the Average Age at Separation—All PCES Employees Who Left the Service in Either Fiscal Year 2000 or Fiscal Year 2007**

Aggregated demographic group	Average age at separation—all separations				Change in age (FY 2000 to FY 2007)
	FY 2000		FY 2007		
	Number	Average	Number	Average	
All males	8	54.3	27	55.7	1.4
White males	6	54.0	20	56.0	2.0
Minority males	2	<sup>a</sup>	7	55.0	N/A
All females	2	<sup>a</sup>	10	55.2	N/A
White females	1	<sup>a</sup>	9	54.3	N/A
Minority females	1	<sup>a</sup>	1	<sup>a</sup>	N/A
All whites	7	54.0	29	55.4	1.4
All minorities	3	55.7	8	56.0	0.3
<b>Total PCES</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

Note: “N/A” means that the change in age was not calculated to either protect individuals’ privacy or because such a calculation was not applicable for this aggregated demographic group.

<sup>a</sup>Data omitted to protect individuals’ privacy.

**Table 6: Aggregated Demographic Data on the Average Age at Retirement—All PCES Employees Who Retired from the Service in Either Fiscal Year 2000 or Fiscal Year 2007**

Aggregated demographic group	Average age at separation—retirement only				Change in age (FY 2000 to FY 2007)
	FY 2000		FY 2007		
	Number	Average	Number	Average	
All males	6	55.9	21	56.8	0.9
White males	5	55.6	15	57.0	1.4
Minority males	1	<sup>a</sup>	6	56.5	N/A
All females	0	0	8	56.0	N/A
White females	0	0	7	55.0	N/A
Minority females	0	0	1	<sup>a</sup>	N/A
All whites	5	55.6	22	56.4	0.8
All minorities	1	<sup>a</sup>	7	57.4	N/A
<b>Total PCES</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>0.7</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

Note: “N/A” means that the change in age was not calculated to either protect individuals’ privacy or because such a calculation was not applicable for this aggregated demographic group.

<sup>a</sup>Data omitted to protect individuals’ privacy.

As shown in tables 7 and 8, the average tenure in the PCES for the 47 employees who *separated* in either fiscal year 2000 or fiscal year 2007 was about 8.2 years in fiscal year 2000 (10 employees) and about 6.4 years in fiscal year 2007 (37 employees)—a decrease in tenure of about 1.8 years. Thirty-five of the 47 separations occurred

because of retirements.<sup>10</sup> The average years of tenure in the PCES, at *retirement*, for the 35 employees who retired decreased—from about 8.1 years (6 employees) to about 6.4 years (29 employees) between fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2007—a decrease of about 1.7 years.

**Table 7: Aggregated Demographic Data on the Average Tenure in PCES—All PCES Separations in Either Fiscal Year 2000 or Fiscal Year 2007**

Aggregated demographic group	Average years of PCES tenure at separation—all separations				Change in tenure (FY 2000 to FY 2007)
	FY 2000		FY 2007		
	Number	Average	Number	Average	
All males	8	7.8	27	6.1	-1.7
White males	6	7.7	20	5.7	-2.0
Minority males	2	<sup>a</sup>	7	7.3	N/A
All females	2	<sup>a</sup>	10	7.0	N/A
White females	1	<sup>a</sup>	9	7.1	N/A
Minority females	1	<sup>a</sup>	1	<sup>a</sup>	N/A
All whites	7	8.0	29	6.1	-1.9
All minorities	3	8.7	8	7.2	-1.5
<b>Total PCES</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>-1.8</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

Note: “N/A” means that the change in tenure was not calculated to either protect individuals’ privacy or because such a calculation was not applicable for this aggregated demographic group.

<sup>a</sup>Data omitted to protect individuals’ privacy.

<sup>10</sup>As noted previously, the remaining 12 employees separated from the Service through, among other actions, resignations, involuntary separations, and death.

**Table 8: Aggregated Demographic Data on the Average Tenure in the PCES—All PCES Retirements in Either Fiscal Year 2000 or Fiscal Year 2007**

Aggregated demographic group	Average years of PCES tenure at separation—retirement only				Change in tenure (FY 2000 to FY 2007)
	FY 2000		FY 2007		
	Number	Average	Number	Average	
All males	6	8.1	21	6.2	-1.9
White males	5	8.2	15	5.6	-2.6
Minority males	1	<sup>a</sup>	6	7.6	N/A
All females	0	0	8	7.1	N/A
White females	0	0	7	7.2	N/A
Minority females	0	0	1	<sup>a</sup>	N/A
All whites	5	8.2	22	6.1	-2.1
All minorities	1	<sup>a</sup>	7	7.4	N/A
<b>Total PCES</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>-1.7</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

Note: “N/A” means that the change in tenure was not calculated to either protect individuals’ privacy or because such a calculation was not applicable for this aggregated demographic group.

<sup>a</sup>Data omitted to protect individuals’ privacy.

### **PCES Employees Who Reported a Targeted Disability in Either Fiscal Year 2000 or Fiscal Year 2007**

Two of the 959 PCES employees on board during fiscal year 2000 reported a condition that constituted a targeted disability, whereas none of the 867 PCES employees on board during fiscal year 2007 reported such a disability. As discussed previously, the list of targeted disabilities are a subset of reportable disabilities and include disabling conditions such as deafness, blindness, and mental illness. As shown in table 9, another 7 PCES employees reported having a disability in fiscal year 2000, while 8 reported a disability in fiscal year 2007. However, none of the conditions they reported constituted a targeted disability. Twenty PCES employees chose not to provide information on their disability status in fiscal year 2000, followed by 22 employees who chose not to disclose this information in fiscal year 2007. As we have reported in the past,<sup>11</sup> an employee’s reluctance to self-report his or her disability status creates the potential for the underreporting of disability data. According to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, for example, employees governmentwide may not report this data due to concerns that such a disclosure will (1) preclude them from employment or advancement, (2) subject them to discrimination, and/or (3) not remain confidential.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: Diversity in the Federal SES and Processes for Selecting New Executives*, GAO-09-110 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 26, 2008).

<sup>12</sup>Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, *Improving the Participation Rate of People with Targeted Disabilities in the Federal Workforce* (Washington, D.C., January 2008).

**Table 9: Disability Status—All PCES Employees On Board during Fiscal Years 2000 and 2007**

<b>Disability Status</b>	<b>FY 2000</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>
Employee reported that he/she had no disability	925	836
Employee reported that he/she did not wish to provide information on his/her disability status	20	22
Employee reported that he/she had a disability (but the condition reported did not constitute a targeted disability)	7	8
Employee reported that he/she had a disability (and the condition reported was a targeted disability)	2	0
No information available	5	1
<b>Total employees</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>867</b>

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Postal Service data.

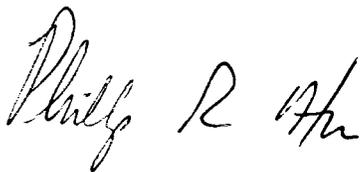
### **Agency Comments and Our Evaluation**

We provided the Postmaster General with a draft of this report for the Service’s review and comment. The Service provided technical comments which we incorporated as appropriate.

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We are sending copies of this report to the Postmaster General and other interested congressional parties. The report also is available at no charge on the GAO Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-2834 or [herrp@gao.gov](mailto:herrp@gao.gov). Contact points for our Office of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are listed in enclosure II.

Sincerely yours,



Phillip Herr  
Director, Physical Infrastructure

Enclosures

## Enclosure I: Scope and Methodology

To address our reporting objectives, we obtained data from the U.S. Postal Service (Service) on the 1,826 employees in the Postal Career Executive Service (PCES) at any time during fiscal year 2000 (959 employees) and fiscal year 2007 (867 employees).<sup>13</sup> We specifically analyzed data on, among other factors, the employees' (1) race, ethnic group, and gender; (2) date of birth; (3) date of appointment to the PCES; (4) date hired by the Service; (5) date of separation from the Service and the reason for the employees' separation, where applicable; and (6) the disability status if reported by the PCES employee. We used these data to determine, among other matters, the average age at appointment to, and separation from, the PCES for each employee in the PCES during fiscal years 2000 and 2007 as well as whether these employees had reported a condition that constituted a targeted disability.

Although we obtained data on the 1,826 employees in the PCES during fiscal years 2000 and 2007, due to incomplete data, we excluded 239 of these employees from our analyses for two of our three objectives—the average age of PCES employees during fiscal years 2000 and 2007 when they (1) were appointed to PCES and (2) separated from the PCES. We excluded a portion of these data, as applicable, from our analyses to enhance the consistency of our reporting. The majority of these exclusions (230 of 239) involve the Service's data for fiscal year 2000. The vast majority of these employees (218 of 230) were appointed to the PCES before 1990 but had separated from the Service at the time we requested the data. According to postal officials, the Service no longer has data on these employees' date of appointment to the PCES because of a change in the agency's data systems. We also excluded the remaining 12 PCES employees on board during fiscal year 2000 because, due to incomplete data, we could not calculate their entire tenure with the Service prior to their appointment to the PCES. According to postal officials, these employees experienced a break in postal employment and the Service's existing data system does not provide complete data on the employees' previous period of postal employment. Finally, we excluded 9 of the 867 employees in the PCES during fiscal year 2007. We excluded these employees because of incomplete data which also resulted from a break in their employment with the Service prior to their appointment to the PCES.

To determine the number of PCES employees on board at any time during fiscal years 2000 and 2007 who reported a condition that constituted a targeted disability, we obtained and reviewed reporting codes used by the Service and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for the self-reporting of all employee disabilities and compared the codes to isolate those that constituted a targeted disability. We also reviewed available information on, among other matters, the difference between reportable and targeted disabilities; the purpose of reporting data

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<sup>13</sup>Data in this report include 48 PCES employees in the Postal Inspection Service during both fiscal years 2000 and 2008, but excludes executives in the Office of the Inspector General and the Postal Regulatory Commission. The data also exclude (1) employees who were paid at PCES wage levels, but are no longer employed in that capacity and (2) employees in acting PCES positions.

on employee disabilities; and past reports by GAO, the Service, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on the representation of PCES employees, by demographic group. To report on PCES employees with targeted disabilities, we included data on the 1,826 employees in the PCES during fiscal years 2000 and 2007.

Finally, we interviewed postal officials and performed electronic testing for obvious errors in accuracy and completeness to ensure the reliability of the Service's data and determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report. Because of the relatively small number of PCES employees affected by employment actions such as appointments to, and separations from, the PCES in either fiscal year 2000 or fiscal year 2007, we generally reported employee data on each demographic group in aggregate form to protect the individuals' privacy. For the same reason, we did (1) not report data on employees in demographic groups of less than three employees or (2) break-out data on employees in the Services' officer ranks (PCES II). We conducted our work from August 2008 to January 2009.

Two cautions apply when using data contained in this report. First, because we did not analyze the factors contributing to changes in the demographic representation of PCES employees, care must be taken when comparing changes in the demographic data. In addition, as noted in this report, data on the universe of PCES employees in this report differ from data in the Service's fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2007 comprehensive statements. According to these statements, there were 859 PCES employees as of the end of fiscal year 2000 and 748 PCES employees as of the end of fiscal year 2007.<sup>14</sup> The number of PCES employees identified in this report are higher than those published previously principally because, for this report, we have included everyone in the PCES during fiscal years 2000 and 2007—not just those on board as of the end of each fiscal year.

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<sup>14</sup>U.S. Postal Service, 2000 Comprehensive Statement on Postal Operations (Washington, D.C., 2001) and U.S. Postal Service, 2007 Comprehensive Statement on Postal Operations (Washington, D.C., 2008).

## **Enclosure II: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments**

### **GAO Contact**

Phillip R. Herr, (202) 512-2834 or [herrp@gao.gov](mailto:herrp@gao.gov).

### **Staff Acknowledgments**

In addition to the contact above, Kathleen Turner, Assistant Director; Heather Frevert; Amanda Miller; Minette Richardson; and Vasiliki Theodoropoulos made key contributions to this report.

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