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National Academy of Public Administration President and CEO Terry Gerton Reacts to OMB Memo on Plan to Reorganize the Executive Branch

WASHINGTON, DC – Terry Gerton, President and CEO of the National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy), today issued a statement reacting to the memorandum issued late yesterday by U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney titled, "Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce." The memo, for leaders of Executive Departments and Agencies, follows a March 13th Presidential Executive Order for reorganizing the Executive Branch.

"There is a lot in this memo that will require agencies to read it through carefully, but there is a lot to be optimistic about," said Gerton. "It tackles the workforce planning issues that really need to be addressed. It supports evidence-based decision-making. It provides the guidelines agencies needed to be able to get more specific about their restructuring recommendations. And, it ties restructuring and workforce planning to the 2019 budget submission so that agencies can do integrated planning.

"At the same time, there are some challenges," said Gerton. "It aims for the 2019 budget when agencies still don't know where the 2017 and 2018 budgets will come out, so the starting baseline is not clear. It asks agencies to look at their own opportunities for efficiencies, but really leaves the majority of interagency trades -- which is where the bulk of the savings will come from -- to be brokered by OMB. There are very few political leaders in place to drive a reform agenda inside the agencies, so the effectiveness of this effort will rely on the career staff. And, the timeframe is short -- less than 90 days to the initial submission and 180 days to the final submission. However, taken together, I think that this is a viable starting point with clear guidance that agencies can work with."

About the National Academy of Public Administration

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