

UNCLASSIFIED

On February 27, I sent you a political appointee transition update (copy below) focusing on the Obama Administration Ethics Executive Order and the associated Ethics Pledge. Over the intervening weeks, numerous questions have been raised regarding the Executive Order and the Ethics Pledge. Accordingly, I commend to your attention the attached document, prepared by the Office of General Counsel, which provides a concise summary of these documents.

Further, if you have not already done so, please notify me by COB this Friday, April 10, of your intention to agree to sign the ethics pledge or depart your position by April 30. Please provide your notification through Tom Tesch (thomas.tesch@sd.mil), Director of the Transition Task Force.

One further question that has arisen involves whether a decision to decline to sign and depart prior to April 30 would be judged to be an "involuntary separation" as an end of term departure would have been. As you may be aware, this could be an important distinction for the purpose of determining benefits and/or retirement.

Please be assured that individuals who decide to leave prior to April 30 will not be penalized by being placed in a disadvantaged position simply because they agreed to voluntarily stay beyond January 20. In my December email, I asked you to consider remaining in a holdover status "after January 20th, until replaced." This delayed but did not eliminate transition departures for political employees. Those who choose not to sign the ethics pledge and leave before April 30, 2009 (or those who choose to sign the pledge and are replaced after April 30, 2009) will be asked to submit their resignations and the Department will treat their separations as involuntary.

Thanks again for your continuing service and support. Please let me know if you have questions on any of the above.

Robert Rangel