

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2003

February 2, 2010

The Honorable John Berry
Director
U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street NW,
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Director Berry,

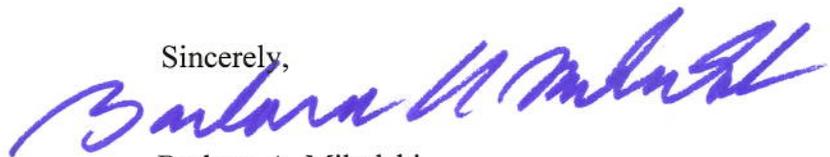
I am writing to raise concerns about the delayed efforts to modernize the Office of Personnel Management's retirement information system. I know problems with this system started long before you became Director and what you inherited is scandalously wasteful and ineffective. But, during this terrible recession, it is unacceptable that federal employees cannot get the information they need to plan for retirement. I am further disappointed to learn federal retirees often receive lower benefits for months or longer while waiting for OPM to calculate annuities. At times retirees have been overpaid, and thus are required to repay the overpayment with interest. This is an equally unacceptable practice.

I know efforts to improve the already damaged system are underway, but increasingly I am hearing from the 132,000 federal employees and 120,000 federal retirees in Maryland. They are fed up with the derailed plans to implement strategic changes. Specifically, my constituents are complaining about the length of time required to calculate service credit deposits and redeposit's, COLA's, and court ordered benefits. In a time of strained family budgets, federal employees and retirees need certainty and reliable information; this cannot be a casual endeavor for your office. The inaccuracies and delays that are the result of today's inadequate system simply cannot continue this way.

This is an urgent matter, and I look forward to hearing from you soon about your plans to address it. Promises made must be promises kept. Federal employees and retirees work hard for our country and deserve timely and accurate annuity information. I know you - like me - have been a federal employee for many years and so appreciate how important these retirement benefits are. I ask that you make this issue your top priority in 2010.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator