

Path to Permanence Talking Points

Be sure to contact your Congressional representatives on your own time and your own dime. Never contact your Congressional representative while on the clock as an agency employee, and never use agency equipment (email, phone, fax, etc). Also, while you may identify your employment, you should make it clear you are speaking to them as private citizen.

You can get contact info at:

For your Senators, http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

For your House rep, <http://www.house.gov/>

Call your elected reps' Congressional office today. Ask for the staffer that handles Forest Service or Park Service issues. Tell them you are a constituent, what Forest you work on, how many employees are in their District or state, if you know. Some talking points:

- Temporary employees receive no health insurance benefits, no life insurance benefits, no retirement benefits, no step increases, and no competitive standing for internal placement into career jobs.
- This season, the Forest Service will hire well over 10,000 “temporary” employees, about a third of the total workforce. The Parks Service hires a similar percentage. Most of the work they will perform is permanent seasonal in nature.
- 3,000 of these Forest Service temps have served for more than 4 seasons. 1,000 have served for 10 or more seasons.
- A seasonal employment authority that provides benefits exists. This would reduce attrition and training costs. A good deal for the employees and a good deal for the taxpayer. However, land management agencies have no authority to convert temporary employees to career seasonal employees – no matter how many years they’ve been doing the same job.
- The National Federation of Federal Employees’ Forest Service Council (NFFE-FSC) has a legislative proposal to give land management agencies the authority to convert temporary employees to career status after 4 seasons of service. Internal merit placement procedures would be used.
- The proposal is modeled on authorities recently given to NASA and IRS.
- The proposal does not require any conversions, and therefore has no direct costs. It merely provides agencies with the authority to convert when they determine this is the most effective way to get their work done.

Ask the staffer if they have seen the NFFE-FSC proposal. If not, you can send an email to nffe@fs.fed.us and ask us to send the proposal. Be sure to include the staffer’s name, spelled correctly, and the elected representative’s name. Otherwise we will be unable to follow up. Alternatively, you can get their email and send them these links (if you do, please cc us at nffe@fs.fed.us so we’ll know who you’ve contacted):

- http://www.nffe-fsc.org/committees/legislative/temps/Temp_Reform_Brief_110506.pdf
- http://www.nffe-fsc.org/committees/legislative/temps/NFFE-FSC_Proposal_110505.pdf

If you choose to email instead of calling, put “Forest Service issue” in the header of your email. This will help the office route it appropriately. If you choose to write, put the same thing at the top of your letter and fax it to the office. Snail mail is not preferred as it is very slow due to delays associated with anthrax screening.

It’s important to keep the pressure on. Be polite and respectful, but persistent. You should call back after a week or so and find out how your elected rep feels about the issue. Would they be willing to sponsor the bill? Would they be willing to co-sponsor it? Also, ask your co-workers to contact the rep as well – but always on your own time and your own dime.