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[www.procurementroundtable.org](http://www.procurementroundtable.org)

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February 4, 2010

The Honorable Susan M. Collins  
United States Senate  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-1904

Dear Senator Collins,

The Procurement Round Table (PRT) is a nonprofit organization chartered in 1984 whose members promote a federal acquisition system that delivers best value to the agency missions it serves and demonstrates high standards of integrity. On behalf of PRT's membership of former federal government acquisition professionals, I write to express our strong support for the "Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act of 2009: (S2901) and the "Federal Acquisition Institute Act of 2009" (S2902).

Throughout our 25 year history, the PRT has been a strong advocate of a strengthened acquisition work force, writing papers and testifying before the Congress on many occasions. We had been disappointed by the workforce reductions and general disregard for the professional development of workforce members by both the Executive and Legislative Branches during the 1990s. We were not surprised by the numerous acquisition process failures that resulted.

We are heartened by the turn-around in attitude and substantive actions of the past several years. Your legislation strongly buttresses that turn-around. It is an investment in the future of the workforce in that it will facilitate recruiting and preparing tremendously talented young people to be future leaders of our profession. The PRT strongly supports the proposed legislation.

We do have two suggestions in the attachment to this letter—as you might expect from a group whose professional lives have been and, for many, continue to be entwined with federal acquisition. We believe these two suggestions that have to do with rotational assignments and mentoring will improve the effectiveness of S2901 in accomplishing its objective.

Sincerely,

William Tuttle  
General USA (Ret.)  
Chairman

cc: Senator Robert F. Bennett  
Senator Claire McCaskill

Suggestions for Strengthening S2901:

1. Modify the rotational assignment clause in S 2901 to include an assignment with a contractor at a time when the contractor is preparing a response to a reasonably complex request for proposals. As drafted, Section 45(c)(3)(A) provides for rotational assignment at three or more executive agencies. That seems somewhat repetitious. A contracting officer candidate would reap significant benefit from at least watching a contractor organize for response to a RFP including the approach to risk assessment and similar considerations not involving proprietary information. Any cost impact to the contractors could be handled by regulation.
2. Acquisition certification programs should include mandatory rotational assignments at all levels and mentoring requirements (both having a mentor at all levels and acting as a mentor) to receive levels 2 and 3 certification. Voluntary rotational programs just don't work, and mentoring is scattershot. The only way to institutionalize them is to make them a mandatory requirement for certification and recertification.