



Report shows federal employees rarely fired

By Candace White

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(SBG) -- It turns out if you want a career with major job security you might try applying to work for the federal government. A new report from the Government Accountability Office provides new evidence that it's extremely difficult to get fired as a federal employee.

Mark Calabria said he saw this first hand with a co-worker during his time working as a manager with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"Occasionally he didn't show up, regularly called in sick when he was not, and even when he showed up there was very little work that got done," Calabria said.

Calabria now works as Director of Financial Regulation Studies at the Cato Institute, and looks back at his years in government as a frustrating experience. And he's not alone.

The GAO Report found in 2013, less than 3500 employees were dismissed. That represents 0.18 percent of the workforce. In 2014, an EPA employee was accused of viewing pornography at work for up to six hours a day and this went on for years, but that employee was placed on paid administrative leave.

EPA head Gina McCarthy testified before Congress and when she was asked why she couldn't fire the person; McCarthy told lawmakers, "I actually have to work through the administrative process as you know."

An administrative process, according to the GAO report, that can often take between six months and a year to complete.

But there's another side to this story. Government and politics are intertwined. Therefore, most people in Washington say employees need additional protection not given to private sector employees - that would leave federal workers exposed to termination every time a new political party comes into power.

Max Stier runs the non-profit, non-partisan Partnership for Public Service. Stier said improvements should be made, but carefully.

"You don't want a situation in which the leadership can simply clean the slate whenever they arrive," Stier said. The risks are actually quite substantial that we get an even worse government if that were the case," he added.