SEC. __. EMPLOYMENT OF RECENT GRADUATES AND STUDENTS

(a) RECENT GRADUATES.—Subchapter I of chapter 31 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 3115. Employment of Recent Graduates

"(a) APPOINTMENT.—In accordance with regulations prescribed by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (in this section referred to as the "Director"), and subject to subsection (b), the head of an agency may appoint, without regard to the provisions of chapter 33 governing appointments in the competitive service, and without regard to section 3320, a qualified candidate to a position classified in a professional or administrative occupational category in accordance with the standards prescribed by the Director.

"(b) REQUIREMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT.—An appointment under paragraph (1) may be made only if the individual so appointed—

"(1)(A) not more than 2 years before the effective date of the appointment, was awarded a baccalaureate or graduate degree from an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)); or

"(B) in the case of an individual who has completed a period of obligated service in a uniformed service of 4 years or more, the effective date of the appointment is not more than 2 years after the date of the discharge or release of such individual from such service; and

"(2) meets the minimum qualification standards as prescribed by the Director for the position to which the individual is being appointed.

"(c) LENGTH OF APPOINTMENT.—An appointment made under subsection (a) shall be an appointment in the excepted service and shall not exceed 2 years.

"(d) TRIAL PERIOD.—An appointment under subsection (a) is subject to a 2-year trial period.

"(e) CONVERSION.—Upon completion of 2 years of satisfactory service, an employee appointed under subsection (a) who is a United States citizen may be converted noncompetitively to a career or career-conditional appointment in the competitive service.

"(f) REGULATIONS.—The Director shall prescribe regulations for the administration of this section. Such regulations shall establish caps on the number of individuals appointed under this section within a specific agency or throughout the Federal Government.".

(b) STUDENTS.—Such subchapter is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 3116. Appointment of Students; excepted service

"(a) APPOINTMENT.—In accordance with regulations prescribed by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (in this section referred to as the "Director"), the head of an agency may appoint, without regard to the provisions of chapter 33 governing appointments in the competitive service, and without regard to section 3320, a qualified student to any position in the excepted service for which the student is qualified.

"(b) CONVERSION.—An individual appointed under subsection (a) may be converted noncompetitively to a term, career, or career conditional position in the competitive service if the individual—

"(1) is awarded—

"(A) a diploma from a home school operated in accordance with the laws of the State in which such home school is located;

"(B) a diploma from a high school; or

"(C) a degree from an institution of higher education;

"(2) completes the required hours of work of the appointment under subsection (a) as prescribed by the Director;

"(3) meets the qualification standards of the competitive service position to which the individual will be converted;

"(4) receives favorable recommendation for appointment by the employing agency in which the individual served during the appointment under subsection (a); and

"(5) is a United States citizen.

"(c) REGULATIONS.—The Director shall prescribe regulations for the administration of this section.

"(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

"(1) The term "high school" has the meaning given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

"(2) The term "institution of higher education" has the meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a).

"(3) The term 'qualified student' means a person enrolled or accepted for enrollment by a high school or an institution of higher education.".

(c) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENTS.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3114 the following new items:

"3115. Employment of Recent Graduates.
"3116. Appointment of Students; excepted service.".

Section-by-Section Analysis

This proposal would modify the recruitment and hiring process to provide additional flexibility in how college graduates and students are hired. For example, this could include creating a limited hiring authority that would allow agencies to hire college graduates noncompetitively into certain positions that either require completion of specific educational requirements or for which completion of an academic degree can be used to meet qualification requirements. Under this proposal, Federal agencies would determine recruitment sources, processes for the solicitation of applications, and would be held responsible for merit-based selections. Because this recent graduate authority is not intended to replace competitive hiring and other entry-level hiring programs, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management would have the authority to cap the number of hires made this authority.

Budgetary Implications: This proposal does not have any significant government-wide cost implications.