

**Authorization and Oversight Plan**  
**Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**115th Congress**

Rule X, Clause 2(d) of the Rules of the House requires each standing committee of the House to adopt and submit a two-year authorization and oversight plan to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the Committee on House Administration, and the Committee on Appropriations by February 15 of the first session of each Congress.

The following is the authorization and oversight plan for the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and its subcommittees for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Committee will conduct oversight and investigations pursuant to its legislative jurisdiction and its broad oversight jurisdiction under Rule X.

This plan contains a detailed list of matters for oversight and investigation that will advance the Committee's mission to ensure the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the federal government and all its agencies. The list is not exhaustive. The Committee will retain the flexibility to investigate instances of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement as they emerge, and to conduct oversight of other issues as appropriate.

## **Lapsed Authorizations**

The Committee will consider lapsed authorizations in its jurisdiction in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, and work to enact necessary authorizations and reforms. These include the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act; the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP); the Opportunity Scholarship Program and DC Tuition Assistance Grant program; the National Historical Publications and Records Commission; the Paperwork Reduction Act; the Merit Systems Protection Board; the E-Government Act; the Office of Government Ethics; and the Office of Special Counsel.

## **Waste, Fraud, Abuse, and Mismanagement**

The Committee will continue to examine instances of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement of the activities of the federal government, with an emphasis on spending. Although the Government Accountability Office (GAO), inspectors general, and whistleblowers raise concerns about waste in federal spending, the executive branch and Congress often fail to adequately address such issues. The Committee's oversight will cover all federal government departments, agencies, and programs with an eye toward solutions for eliminating wasteful spending and abuse of authority. The following sections address specific areas in which the Committee has an opportunity to address wasteful spending. Furthermore, the Committee will offer targeted legislative proposals that proactively address identified waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement.

## **Open Government and Transparency**

The Committee will continue to advocate for technological solutions to increase transparency throughout the government. The Committee will seek to ensure that the federal government's information — with a few well-defined exceptions, such as national security information — is available online and formatted in ways that facilitate easy access and analysis. The Committee will evaluate possible legislation to set policy goals for technology-driven transparency for program performance, regulatory materials, and legislative documents.

In 2016, Congress passed S. 337, the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, Pub. L. 114-185. In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee will work to oversee implementation of this Act, and to ensure timely and effective implementation.

The Committee will also examine the implementation of other open government laws, such as the Presidential Records Act, the Federal Records Act, and the Federal Advisory Committees Act, and consider whether any statutory mandates may impede public access to information.

The Committee will continue to investigate the persistent challenges and failures associated with the preservation of presidential and federal records, as required by law. Dating back to the Clinton Administration, changes in technology have challenged each subsequent administration's ability to capture, manage, and preserve the growing and diverse volume of electronic records. Despite new policies intended to improve transparency, concerns have been raised that problems remain. The Committee intends to examine the challenges created by the changing landscape of digital communication, including the use of personal email and social media for government business.

In 2014, the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) was signed into law. The DATA Act, if effectively implemented, will transform federal spending transparency by providing program and activity level spending information. The Committee will continue oversight conducted in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress and oversee implementation efforts by the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Treasury.

The Committee will continue to monitor implementation of the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act, Pub. L. 114-40, including transmission of the Commission's final report which is due in Fall 2017.

## **Cybersecurity**

Under the Federal Information Management Act of 2002 (FISMA), which Congress updated in December 2014, and the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015 (FCEA), federal agencies are required to implement a number of security controls on their information systems. In July 2016 the Committee sent a letter to 26 of the largest federal agencies and the White House inquiring about their compliance with FISMA and FCEA, including overdue reports on cybersecurity. The Committee will continue to focus its oversight efforts on the state of cybersecurity at federal agencies, contractors, and other entities in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The Committee will also continue its oversight of federal agencies' policies and regulations affecting cybersecurity technologies and practices. This includes federal and state law enforcement policy towards the use of strong-encryption in and on information technology devices and applications.

Additionally, the Committee will examine the role and responsibility of the federal government in global internet governance, specifically regarding the effect of data protection laws on U.S. economic interests. The Committee will continue its oversight of the development of U.S. policy towards deterring international actors from engaging in unlawful hacking or other cyber activities that fall outside international norms of behavior.

After a year-long investigation into the data breaches at the Office of Personnel Management in 2014 and 2015, majority staff of the Committee produced a report that included findings and recommendations to improve federal cybersecurity, incident response, and IT acquisition. The minority staff of the Committee also produced a memorandum to minority members of the Committee that included findings and recommendations on the data breaches. The Committee's oversight of IT management and cybersecurity will include an emphasis on the report's recommendations, specifically, a zero-trust cybersecurity posture, the role of the Chief Information Officer in IT security, and the transition of background investigations to the new National Background Investigations Bureau and IT security responsibility for background investigation data to the Department of Defense.

## **Security Clearances/National Bureau of Background Investigations**

On January 22, 2016, the White House announced the creation of the National Bureau of Background Investigations (NBIB), which absorbs the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) existing Federal Investigative Services, and transfers to the Department of Defense (DOD) responsibility for the design, development, security, and operation of the background investigations information technology systems.<sup>1</sup> NBIB officially began operating on October 1, 2016, with a mandate to make the security clearance process run more efficiently and securely. However, the most recent progress report since then, issued in December by the Performance Accountability Council, showed background investigation times increasing, a trend consistent throughout 2016. In addition, President Obama issued Executive Order 13764 on January 17, 2017, regarding background investigations for federal employees and contractors. Structural concerns also remain regarding communications between the DOD, NBIB, DOJ, FBI, and OPM. DOD is charged with protecting and administering NBIB's information technology systems, but the precise lines of authority and responsibility between the various agencies is not always clear. In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee will continue its examination of the security clearance and suitability review process and NBIB, including the effectiveness of operations during transition, plans for reforming the background investigations system, and cybersecurity at NBIB.

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<sup>1</sup> White House, Press Release, *The Way Forward for Federal Background Investigations* (Jan. 22, 2016), available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2016/01/22/way-forward-federal-background-investigations>.

## Information Technology Management

Federal agencies spent over \$81 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 buying, operating, and maintaining information technology (IT) products, services, and systems. Many of these systems fail to deliver the productivity gains expected, or worse, simply fail. In addition, the federal government spends over 75 percent of this IT funding on Operations & Maintenance (O&M) in part because of the substantial amount of legacy IT on which federal agencies rely. Legacy IT is a significant area of both wasteful spending and security vulnerabilities.

The Committee will review the federal government's IT acquisition and management policies to ensure that taxpayers are getting the maximum return for their money. The Committee will closely monitor the executive branch's efforts to stop IT projects that are not on target, streamline those that are wasteful, and work to ensure that inefficient legacy systems are decommissioned.

The Committee will conduct IT acquisition oversight and specifically monitor agencies' implementation of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA). The Act provides an important tool to help agencies manage and acquire IT. As part of this oversight effort, the Committee will continue to issue FITARA Scorecards approximately every six months to assess agencies' implementation of the law. The Scorecard measures performance of FITARA-related activities, such as agencies efforts to assess risk in IT investments, IT budget savings, use of incremental development in software acquisition and consolidation of data centers.

The Committee will look broadly at ways technology can improve governmental processes. In particular, the Committee will focus on the need to transition from outdated legacy systems to newer and more efficient systems — such as those that utilize cloud computing and other technologies — to drive savings. The Committee will be reviewing the status of agency modernization efforts by continuing inquiries related to inventory of legacy IT systems and outdated and unsupported operating systems and software. In addition, the Committee will consider legislative options to incentivize agencies to modernize IT by allowing agencies to reinvest savings realized through modernization. The Committee will also continue to assess the progress of federal IT investments and shine light on underperforming programs and assets.

Changes in technology present government agencies with new possibilities and new challenges. The Committee will continue to monitor for agency misuse of technology and identify areas for improved oversight. For example, given the prominence of cloud computing in efforts to modernize federal IT systems, the Committee will continue its oversight of the Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program (FedRAMP) to ensure federal agencies are able to quickly adopt secure cloud based solutions.

The Committee will review the effect of federal IT mandates under laws such as the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA), the E-Government Act of 2002, and the Clinger-Cohen Act. The Committee will seek input from government employees on the front lines of acquisition and implementation to determine whether these mandates have improved data security, public access, and IT enterprise planning, and at what cost.

The Committee will also closely follow the implementation the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014 (DATA Act).

## **E-Government Act**

In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee will work to enact needed authorizations and reforms for programs in its jurisdiction with lapsed authorizations. Included in the Committee's list of expired authorizations are portions of the E-Government Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-347:

- General Services Administration (GSA) E-Government Fund;
- GSA programs to maintain, improve, and promote an integrated federal internet portal for public access to government information and services;
- OMB coordinated program to develop and maintain a government-wide repository and website about federal government research and development;
- GSA program to study best practices at community technology centers, to develop and disseminate online tutorials, and promote community technology centers generally;
- GSA program to develop and maintain common protocols for geographic information systems;
- OMB coordinated program to ensure government-wide information security; and
- OMB, Office of Electronic Government, for management and promotion of electronic government services.

The Committee will also consider:

- Section 834, Federal Data Center Consolidation Initiative (expires October 1, 2018);
- Section 832, Enhanced Transparency and Improved Risk Management (expires December 19, 2019); and
- Section 833, Portfolio Review (expires December 19, 2019).

## **Privacy in a Digital Age**

Technological innovations are supplying federal agencies with increasing information about the lives of individual citizens. The Committee will broadly investigate whether the protections provided by privacy laws and the Fourth Amendment are sufficient to protect an individual's privacy in the digital age, with an emphasis on access to geolocation data.

The FBI currently keeps its own database with approximately 21 million photographs, as well as having access to millions of state driver's license photos. The Committee will monitor and conduct oversight of the FBI's use of facial recognition technology and the use of facial recognition technology by other law enforcement agencies.

The increasing use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) presents concerns over the current regulations establishing authority over the airspace above a person's property. The Committee

will examine the privacy and regulatory issues surrounding the intersection of UAS and airspace rights and law.

In 2016, OMB issued a memo to heads of executive departments and agencies to reassess the structure and resources of its privacy programs. The Committee will conduct oversight of federal agency chief privacy officers to assess the structure and resources of agencies' privacy programs.

The Committee will also examine and evaluate agency privacy and security practices to ensure protection of confidential data including personally identifiable information.

## **Emerging Technology**

The Committee, which is responsible for oversight across the government, is uniquely situated to bring together multiple federal agencies that have (or claim to have) regulatory authority over a particular field or technology. Generally, the Committee's goal is ensuring regulators do not place undue or impractical burdens on new technologies, such as conflicting or duplicative regulations.

The Committee will examine the 20th-century regulatory state and structure to identify potential ways of either adjusting or abandoning laws and regulations that are outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective in the digital age.

The Committee will also examine specific new technologies and their potential benefits and risks, such as augmented reality, artificial intelligence, facial recognition, autonomous delivery vehicles, and quantum computing.

## **Federal Regulation and the Regulatory Process**

While some federal regulations are necessary to effectively implement the laws that Congress passes to protect health, consumers, and the environment, federal regulations can also impose significant and unnecessary burdens on regulated industry. The Committee will place special emphasis on oversight of the federal regulatory process to ensure that federal regulators work to minimize unnecessary burdens on small businesses, job creation, economic growth, and competitiveness in the global marketplace while maintaining protections for the American people.

The Committee will evaluate rulemakings to ensure that they do not exceed their authority and adhere to the requirements embodied in statutes. Regulators have an obligation to develop rules in an open and transparent manner and provide adequate time for the public to participate in a meaningful way. Therefore, the Committee will scrutinize practices not subject to typical rulemaking requirements, such as the issuance of guidance documents, interim final rulemakings, and settlement agreements, as well as local, state, and federal taxes, fines, fees, and penalties.

In addition, the Committee will focus on the role of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in agency rulemakings to ensure that it carries out its regulatory duties in a timely and transparent manner. The Committee will also evaluate OIRA's statutory role relating to the lapsed authorization of the Paperwork Reduction Act. The Committee will seek to define OIRA's role regarding oversight and approval of the agency information collections processes.

Finally, the Committee will examine the effect of unfunded mandates on state and local governments and private entities, and explore ways to potentially enhance the effectiveness of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995.

## **Health Care and Entitlements**

The Committee will identify waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement in government entitlement programs. The Committee will conduct oversight related to the budgetary and economic effect of America's entitlement programs as well as options that would increase choice, access, and quality in health care markets and lower the cost of health care. The Committee will also examine the increase in federal entitlement programs, with a focus on waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement within those programs.

The Committee will continue to conduct oversight of the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). Specifically, the Committee will focus on bringing transparency to the federal government's increased role in health care markets, with a focus on determining the effect of policies on consumer choice and insurance premiums. The Committee will continue to closely examine regulations promulgated under new PPACA authorities, and other executive branch actions, to ensure that they are consistent with the text and intent of the law. The Committee will continue to review health care policy, procedures, and practices at the federal, state, and local level, in particular potential new policies that could change the PPACA. Specifically, the Committee will examine the potential effects of partial or complete PPACA repeal on the employer-sponsored insurance market, the individual and small group insurance markets, and other federal health care programs, including Medicare and Medicaid. The Committee will also conduct oversight of any plans or proposals to replace the PPACA and will oversee implementation of any replacement to the legislation. The Committee will focus on how partial or complete repeal of the PPACA, and the implementation of any proposed replacement plans, will affect the availability, cost, and quality of insurance coverage for all Americans. The Committee will remain vigilant to recover misallocated or unused funds under remaining PPACA authorities.

The Committee will also conduct oversight of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with a focus on ensuring that FDA properly evaluates the safety of drugs and medical devices while also promoting competition and enhancing transparency. The Committee will examine the causes and effects of critical pharmaceutical drug shortages, recent increases in the price of drugs, and the policies and procedures in place to protect the public from the outbreak of dangerous or deadly diseases.

## **Drug Policy and Safety**

The Committee will continue to work toward the reauthorization of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Congress last authorized ONDCP in 2006, and the authorization expired at the end of 2010. Since its authorization lapsed, ONDCP has continued to receive appropriations each year. The Committee held a reauthorization hearing in December 2015, which examined potential obstacles to reauthorization. ONDCP's proposed statutory changes for its reauthorization center on expanding ONDCP's work in demand reduction. For example, the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas or "HIDTA" program currently focuses more on drug supply reduction, seeking to eliminate both drug trafficking and production throughout the United States.

## **The Government Accountability Office**

As the authorizer of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Committee will continue to support its mission. In addition, and as required by House Rule X, clause 4(c)(1)(A), the Committee will continue to receive and examine GAO reports and submit to the House such recommendations as it considers necessary or desirable in connection with the subject matter of the reports.

In February 2017, the GAO will issue its biennial "High Risk List" report, which identifies government programs that are particularly vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. The Committee will provide ongoing oversight of agencies and programs included on the High Risk List by holding hearings, meeting with agency officials responsible for included programs, and monitoring agencies' corrective plans and actions.

In April 2017, the GAO will issue its annual report on opportunities to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication and realize financial benefits in the federal government. The Committee will hold hearings on the report and will continue to monitor GAO's findings to determine areas of federal activity that are duplicative and inefficient. The Committee will also provide particular attention to duplicative items that GAO also includes on its "high priority recommendations" list.

The Committee will consider reforms related to GAO's function of providing legal opinions to Congress on agency Anti-Deficiency Act (ADA) allegations. Generally, the ADA prohibits federal agencies from accepting gratuitous services from contractors.

Finally, the Committee will monitor implementation of GAO congressional protocols and propose revisions as appropriate.



## **Financial Sector and Consumer Protection**

The Committee will conduct oversight of the financial sector, focusing on those regulatory agencies at the heart of the financial crisis and those agencies created, or that saw their powers expanded by the Dodd-Frank Act of 2010. The Committee will monitor financial regulators' management, technological initiatives, and rulemaking, with a view towards promoting capital formation, predictable and efficient markets, and investor and consumer protection.

The Committee will monitor the work of the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC) and the Office of Financial Research (OFR), including the "systemically important financial institution" designation process.

Key topics for oversight include the need for technology-driven transparency in financial regulatory filings so that markets can quickly digest crucial information, management, and communications challenges at key agencies, including the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and the continued implementation of the Dodd-Frank Act.

The Committee will conduct oversight of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and their regulator, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA). The Committee will further explore potential risks to taxpayers associated with Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and government housing policies, and will work to ensure that additional taxpayer money is spent efficiently and effectively. The Committee will also conduct oversight to ensure that FHFA is implementing policies that protect homeowners from abusive mortgage origination and servicing practices and that maximize assistance to homeowners, in accordance with federal statutes.

The Committee will conduct oversight of the Federal Reserve, including its use of non-traditional quantitative easing techniques, potential financial risks associated with its growing portfolio of assets, and the effectiveness of its regulatory procedures.

The Committee will continue to monitor the SEC's implementation of the JOBS Act and Dodd-Frank Act. The Committee will examine the effects of proposed changes to the Dodd-Frank Act.

The Committee will continue to conduct oversight of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, focusing on the Bureau's management, budget, operations, rulemakings, enforcement actions, and its success in protecting consumers from improper and abusive financial products. The Committee will examine any proposals to change operational structure, funding mechanisms, or enforcement authorities of the Bureau.

The Committee will continue to conduct oversight of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and review the actions it took in monitoring financial fraud with respect to third-party payment processors.

The Committee will examine consumer protection efforts across the federal government. As a part of this oversight, the Committee will examine the regulatory and enforcement actions of the Federal Trade Commission, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

## **Inspectors General**

On December 16, 2016, the Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2016, Pub. L. 114-317, was signed into law. The bipartisan bill clarifies that inspectors general have complete and timely access to agency documents and creates a number of structural reforms to coordinate and oversee the activities of the various inspectors general. The bill also mandates reporting by the inspectors general to Congress regarding their unimplemented recommendations to agencies and the number of criminal referrals made to the Department of Justice.

The Committee will continue to work closely with the inspectors general to ensure they have the tools needed to perform their important oversight work. With the new reporting requirements on unimplemented recommendations, the Committee intends to help inspectors general demand accountability from their respective agencies. The new reporting requirements will also allow the Committee to have better oversight of how the Department of Justice is choosing to respond to criminal referrals from offices of inspectors general.

The Committee will continue to encourage that inspector general vacancies be filled and work to highlight the importance of filling these positions.

As in previous congresses, the Committee will send a survey to all 70-plus inspectors general to obtain data on their operations.

## **Whistleblower Protection**

The Committee will maintain its efforts related to the protection of whistleblowers in the federal government. This focus has widespread bipartisan support in Congress, and the Committee considers it a significant priority.

The Committee has legislative jurisdiction over federal workforce measures, including those to protect whistleblowers and prevent retaliation. In addition to legislation already passed out of the House this Congress to reauthorize the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) and improve its effectiveness, the Committee will pursue further legislation to ensure the ability of OSC, the Merit Systems Protection Board, and the U.S. court system to protect whistleblowers. The Committee will also continue to pursue legislation to improve the Department of Justice's processes for responding to complaints of whistleblower retaliation in the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The Committee is committed to encouraging a culture throughout the federal government of protecting whistleblowers, and will work to encourage best practices to prevent retaliation. To that end, the Committee will continue to work closely with OSC, the agency tasked with policing whistleblower retaliation in the federal government. The Committee will also work closely with Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency's Whistleblower Ombudsman Working Group, created as a result of the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2012's

requirement that each inspector general appoint a whistleblower ombudsman. In addition to supporting these entities, the Committee will also conduct oversight of them when necessary to ensure they are working as effectively as possible.

The Committee will continue to work directly with whistleblowers in the federal government, including those who make disclosures of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement to the Committee. The Committee considers such disclosures an extremely important source for Congressional oversight, aiding the Committee's efforts to ensure transparency and accountability in the federal government. The Committee will continue to advance policies that protect federal employees' rights to communicate directly with Congress and to ensure federal employees are aware of these rights, encouraging other whistleblowers to come forward.

The Committee will examine directives restricting federal employees from communicating freely with Congress, as well as allegations of retaliation or reprisal for communicating with Congress. Numerous laws protect the rights of federal employees and whistleblowers to provide information to Congress, including the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act, section 744 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016, section 713 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016, and 5 U.S.C. section 7211. For more than a century, Congress has protected the rights of federal employees to communicate with Congress about waste, fraud, and abuse in the executive branch.

## **U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) Reauthorization**

The mission of the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is to (1) safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal from whistleblowing; (2) provide employees a mechanism for disclosing wrongdoing in government agencies; (3) enforce and provide advice on the Hatch Act, which restricts political activity by government employees; and (4) enforce employment rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 for federal employees who serve or have served in the uniformed services. The Committee conducts ongoing oversight of OSC, and also interacts with the agency frequently in the protection of whistleblowers.

OSC's last reauthorization, passed in 2002, covered FY 2003 through FY 2007, and lapsed at the end of that period. In the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee approved and the House passed H.R. 4639, the Thoroughly Investigating Retaliation Against Whistleblowers Act. Introduced by Representative Rod Blum (R-IA), the bill would have reauthorized OSC for a period of five years. In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, Representative Blum reintroduced the bill as H.R. 69, which the House voted to approve on January 4, 2017. H.R. 69 would reauthorize OSC from FY 2017 to FY 2021.

## **Office of Government Ethics**

The Committee will continue its oversight and support of the Office of Government Ethics (OGE). The agency's mandate is to ensure uniformity across executive branch ethics programs by advising on and interpreting ethics laws, policies, and training. Last Congress, the Committee

examined public comments by OGE regarding ongoing ethics issues which OGE had yet to fully investigate. The Committee will continue to ensure OGE operates in a manner consistent with its mission of providing clear, impartial ethics guidance to federal agencies.

The Committee will also consider reauthorization of OGE, as well as substantive and procedural reforms to improve its effectiveness. OGE's statutory authorization lapsed in 2007, and it has asked the Committee to begin the reauthorization process.

## **Federal Financial Management**

The Committee will examine federal financial management. This review will include compliance with financial management and accounting laws, as well as the security and reliability of federal financial systems. The Committee will also focus on agency efforts to reduce improper payments and achieve an unqualified audit opinion for the federal government.

Financial management reforms in 1990 required all federal agencies to conduct financial audits and for GAO to audit the consolidated financial statements of the federal government. To date, GAO has not been able to issue an audit opinion. In the 2016 statement which included the financial statements as of and for FY 2015 and FY 2016, GAO identified three reasons for not issuing an opinion: 1) the federal government cannot account for and reconcile intra-governmental financial activity between federal entities, 2) the Department of Treasury has not developed an effective process for preparing the consolidated statements, and 3) the Department of Defense has yet to produce auditable financial statements.

The size of DOD's budget accounts for a significant portion of government spending and, as a result, the United States has never produced an audit of its financial statements. The Committee will focus on overseeing DOD's financial management processes and its progress towards becoming auditable.

The Committee will also continue to investigate improper payments distributed by federal agencies. Under the 2002 Improper Payments Information Act (IPIA), federal agencies are required to annually review all programs and activities to identify those entities susceptible to significant improper payments. For FY 2015, improper payments totaled \$137 billion.

## **Government Contracting**

Controlling federal government contract spending is critically important. The federal government buys a wide variety of goods and services, from pens to sophisticated weapons systems to cybersecurity tools and services. In FY 2016, the federal government spent \$464 billion on contracting, and in FY 2015, the government spent \$431 billion. More than half of federal contract spending is on services. While more recently contract spending has declined — compared to \$540 billion in contract spending in FY 2008 — there is much oversight work to do in this area. Consequently, the Committee will investigate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement and consider opportunities for acquisition reform.

The Committee will conduct oversight of agency contracting to ensure there is appropriate management of taxpayer funds and agencies are effectively using acquisition strategies to achieve policy goals. Such policy goals include effective deployment of cyber tools, timely processing of disability benefits, and accurate and timely provision of citizen services. Further, the Committee will conduct oversight that includes a focus on contract management and identify areas where the government has not effectively optimized commercial best practices. The Committee will also monitor the Administration's use of civil and criminal remedies to address wrongdoing and will promote transparency at the point of contract award and throughout the life cycle of federal contracts to prevent waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement.

The Committee will also focus on oversight of IT acquisition because far too many federal IT investments fail or incur cost overruns and schedule slippages and do not contribute to mission objectives. As a result of these failures in IT acquisition, the GAO designated "Improving the Management of IT Acquisitions and Operations" as high risk in February 2015.

The Committee oversight and acquisition reform objectives will be focused on: (1) ensuring the federal government acquisition process reflects commercial best practices, to the extent practicable; (2) leveraging public and private sector capacity to provide goods and services efficiently; and (3) encouraging innovation and modernization of goods and services with streamlined contract processes and limited government-unique requirements.

## **Suspension and Debarment**

The federal government spends almost \$1 trillion on contracts and grants annually. Despite congressional oversight efforts, GAO has determined that there are serious weaknesses in the suspension and debarment programs of numerous agencies. This has resulted in the awarding of federal funds to companies, organizations and individuals barred from receiving such funds, including those with criminal convictions, federal tax liabilities, or ties to terrorist organizations. The Committee will continue to conduct oversight to promote efficiency, transparency, and accountability related to suspension and debarment, to include improvements to managing the government-wide database of suspended and disbarred contractors.

## **Governmental Reorganizations**

As required by House Rule X, clause 4 (c)(1)(B), the Committee will continue to evaluate the effects of laws enacted to reorganize the legislative and executive branches of the Government.

## **Grant Reform**

The Committee will continue to conduct oversight of federal grants, including grant programs and activities. The Committee will examine the efficiency, fairness, and transparency of the grant making process, and evaluate opportunities to reform and streamline the grant making process across the federal government. The Committee's review will extend to emergency and

non-emergency grant making, including disaster grant making and processes employed to coordinate recovery between the federal government and states. The Committee will also examine Department of Justice grants and other law enforcement assistance programs, such as the Department of Defense's 1033 program.

## **Government of the District of Columbia**

The Committee will review the District of Columbia's use of federal dollars to fund programs such as school choice, as well as other District initiatives. The Committee will work to reauthorize both the Tuition Assistance Grant (TAG) program, which provides grants to District residents attending colleges and universities across the country, and the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), which provides grants to District students to expand school choice. In addition, the Committee will review District expenditures on local programs to ensure that the expenditures are in line with Congressional mandates and federal law. The Committee will also work to strengthen Congress's oversight of the District and exercise of its plenary legislative authority granted by the Constitution.

## **Metro - Washington Metropolitan Area Transit**

The Committee will continue its oversight of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Despite a number of programs aimed at bringing the transit system back into a state of good repair, the system continues to experience delays and infrastructure breakdowns. The Committee will continue to hold WMATA accountable for operational effectiveness and safety. The Committee will also continue to conduct oversight of WMATA's financial status to ensure good stewardship of federal funds.

## **2020 Decennial Census**

The cost of the decennial census has continued to rise decade after decade. For example, the total cost for the 2000 census was \$9.4 billion. By the time of the 2010 census, the cost for administering the census had risen to \$12.3 billion. For the 2020 census, the Bureau estimates a cost of more than \$17 billion.<sup>2</sup> The Committee is closely monitoring the development of the Census — including its content, technology development (including effectiveness and related security), and eventual deployment.

Notably, beginning in August 2017, the Census Bureau will conduct its End-to-End Test to verify and validate the operations, procedures, systems, and field infrastructure it will use in the 2020 decennial census. This is a key milestone in the eventual deployment of the 2020 decennial census. Subsequently, the Committee will hold hearings, meet with Bureau officials, and monitor developments to help ensure the Bureau meets data accuracy goals while holding down costs.

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<sup>2</sup> 2020 Census Operational Plan (Nov. 2015).

## **National Archives and Federal Records**

The Committee will continue its oversight and support of the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) management of government records and the procedures NARA is putting in place to ensure government-wide implementation of the Presidential and Federal Records Act Amendments of 2014, Pub. L. 113-187, including the treatment of records generated by new technologies, including social media. The Committee will also examine NARA's recommended procedures and agency adoption of those procedures to ensure the electronic capture and archival of records created electronically.

The Committee will examine the Presidential Library system, specifically looking at the governance of the Presidential Libraries, how the foundations interact with NARA, and how the foundations and NARA coordinate to fulfill the mission of the Presidential Library system.

The Committee will also examine the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, housed within NARA. The Commission, which provides grants to organizations to support the preservation and dissemination of historical publications and records, still receives dedicated funding. The Commission has operated without authorization since FY 2009.

## **The Federal Workforce**

As the authorizer of civil service rules under Title 5 of the United States Code, the Committee will conduct oversight to ensure the federal workforce is operating efficiently and effectively and as Congress intended. As part of these standing efforts, the Committee will continue oversight of federal employee morale and issues contributing to such morale, as informed by the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The Committee will also continue work initiated in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress to examine agencies' tables of penalties to help identify areas that agency disciplinary guidelines could be improved.

In addition, as the nation nears the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, Pub. L. 95-454, the Committee will also undertake a comprehensive review of the civil service system reform. Modernizing the civil service system is critical to better serving the federal workforce and the American taxpayers it serves. The hiring process must be competitive, merit-based, technology-based, and conducted in a cost-effective manner. In addition, a review of the General Schedule and occupational families and job series should be conducted to determine whether and how it can be improved and overhauled to better entice talented youth into the government and reward high performers. The Committee will examine other areas for potential improvement, including the federal retirement system, skills gaps, accountability and removal processes, labor management, and reform of the Senior Executive Service (SES).

## **United States Postal Service**

The United States Postal Service (USPS) lost \$5.6 billion in FY 2016 and continues to face systemic liquidity challenges as mail volume continues to decline. Additionally, USPS currently stands in default on \$33.9 billion in payments to the U.S. Treasury to fund the costs of retiree health care. GAO added USPS's financial condition to its high-risk list in 2009 and, since then, has been a major proponent of reform. GAO believes that major restructuring is necessary and not doing so will increase the risk that taxpayers and the U.S. Treasury will have to provide financial relief.

Since FY 2006, USPS mail volume has declined by 28 percent, with the greatest decline in its most profitable product, First-Class Mail. Persistent, ongoing declines in mail volume are now projected for the near future as electronic communication increasingly supplants paper-based communication. While some of these losses are offset by growth in package delivery, including 14 percent growth during FY 2016, the Committee plans to continue examining near-term risks to USPS of the possible diversion of significant portions of package volume to new competitors and whether USPS's financial systems properly account for package delivery cost.

The Committee will examine actions and plans USPS is taking to preserve universal service, avoid insolvency, improve financial management, and prevent a taxpayer bailout. The Committee will also pursue the enactment of substantive postal reform legislation, building on reform bills the Committee reported during the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Additionally, the Committee will continue to examine the security of international mail coming into the United States through USPS. Currently, inbound international mail transported by private carriers is held to heightened security standards when compared to inbound international mail transported by USPS. As a result, international drug traffickers and other criminal enterprises have targeted USPS as a preferred option to transport contraband into the United States. Specifically, the Committee will seek to identify means to improve the security of incoming mail within the framework of the Universal Postal Union treaty governing the international exchange of mail.

## **Homeland Security**

The creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) required one of the largest consolidations of federal agencies in history. The Department brought together 22 different government offices, agencies, and components. Though the Department has made progress in integrating these various agencies, there is still room to improve efficiency and responsiveness. The Committee's wide oversight jurisdiction and legislative jurisdiction over executive branch reorganizations uniquely positions it to conduct oversight across the Department. The Committee will review the operations, management, and decision-making at DHS. The Committee will evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of homeland security strategy, laws, initiatives, and technology. In particular, the Committee will focus on aviation, rail, port, and transit infrastructure; immigration and border security; federal law enforcement agencies;



facilities at risk; federal funding interaction with local responders; and efforts to strengthen the U.S. public health system.

The Committee will also review the issuance of visas and passports and the operations of U.S. consulates, as well as other border control and security identification issues.

The Committee will conduct oversight of the federal government's emergency management capabilities to ensure that lessons learned from previous disasters — such as the need for improved planning and execution, communications operability, and coordination between all levels of government and within the federal government — are part of federal agency reform efforts.

The Committee will also conduct oversight of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure it is prepared to handle domestic emergencies.

The Committee will conduct oversight of DHS's federal law enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Secret Service. The Committee will examine whether funding is adequate to support the Secret Service in restoring staffing to required levels in all categories of employment. The Committee will continue to monitor the effect of excessive unpaid overtime on hiring, attrition, and morale.

## **National Security and Foreign Operations**

The Committee's interagency jurisdiction allows for the examination of the effectiveness, efficiency, and cooperation of all U.S. government agencies and departments with a role in national security and foreign operations. The Committee will conduct oversight of policies, procedures, and programs affecting the safety and security of U.S. government personnel and facilities abroad. The Committee's oversight will include, but not be limited to, U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Defense efforts to protect embassy personnel and property. In addition, the Committee will study the relationship between the United States and international organizations of which the United States is a member, as required by House Rule X, clause 4 (c)(1)(C).

The Committee's oversight of U.S. diplomatic, military, and development efforts within the CENTCOM area of responsibility will include investigations of the training and equipping of the Afghan National Security Forces; the efficiency and accountability of a variety of development and reconstruction efforts, including the use of private contractors; the capacity of various U.S. Government agencies and departments to carry on activities in Afghanistan; and the State Department's diplomatic mission in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Committee will identify ways to reform the interagency process and eliminate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement among the various U.S. national security agencies, departments, and foreign aid organizations. The Committee's oversight will include, but not be limited to a review of U.S. military combatant commands, especially AFRICOM, SOUTHCOM, U.S. Agency for

International Development, U.S. Institute of Peace, and the State Department. In particular, the Committee will monitor the status of reconstruction efforts in Haiti.

The Committee will conduct oversight of U.S. diplomatic, military, and development efforts to address the issue of global terrorism both in the short-term and long-term. The Committee's oversight will include whether the United States is maximizing the use of all elements of the national security power and how anti-terror efforts, such as the detention and trial of unlawful enemy combatants, are coordinated with other important U.S. national security interests and the rule of law. The Committee's review will include the international standing of the United States, humanitarian assistance, development programs, and public diplomacy efforts.

The Committee will evaluate U.S. vulnerability to global energy supply disruptions. The scope of the Committee's oversight will include the extent to which supply diversification through the production of domestic renewable and non-renewable resources is an adequate and cost-effective solution for the Defense Department's national security objectives.

The Committee will continue oversight of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' care and management of veterans' needs. The Committee will examine the large backlog of veterans' benefit claims and efforts to streamline the claims process, as well as veteran transitional issues.

The Committee will continue to oversee and assess the efforts of the United States to secure and protect human rights and religious freedom throughout the world. The Committee will continue to review whether the executive branch is acting in accordance with U.S. national security interests, constitutional parameters, international treaty obligations, and human rights standards.

The Committee will identify ways to eliminate waste and promote accountability and effectiveness in U.S. Department of Defense efforts, including in its use of private contractors.

## **Transportation and Infrastructure**

The Committee will examine the country's aging infrastructure. It will address ways to modernize the way Americans move by reviewing the efficiency of national transportation and infrastructure projects and by identifying and preventing waste. Oversight in this area will include highway and airport redevelopment projects, and fixed rail system improvements.

Additionally, the Committee will examine high speed rail developments and concepts throughout the country, as well as overseas, to help determine the most feasible and cost-effective way to improve mass transit.

The Committee will also consider the role technology plays in advancing commercial and private travel. Oversight in this area will include looking into laws, regulations, and policies related to unmanned aerial vehicles and self-driving cars, for example. The Committee will also examine the status of our nation's merchant marine, including the current condition of the ocean-going fleet in the foreign trade.

## **Transportation Safety and Security**

The Committee will continue its oversight of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) this Congress. In the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee's investigative efforts highlighted systemic management challenges, sexual misconduct, abuse of directed reassignments, whistleblower retaliation, and various security-related concerns. Moving forward, the Committee will also evaluate TSA's internal reorganization and workforce issues to identify potential areas for reform.

## **Energy**

The United States continues to be a world leader in energy production. It is crucial that the executive branch foster economic growth and security in this industry. With this goal in mind, the Committee will continue to examine the state of U.S. energy production and how it intersects with the administrative regulatory regime.

This will include looking at the treatment of advanced production techniques, such as hydraulic fracturing, that have led to this boon. In addition, the Committee will examine the transportation infrastructure used for these supplies, such as oil and gas pipelines and coal export facilities. Insufficient capacity has led to bottlenecks, forcing producers to transport domestic oil and gas by inefficient means, such as rail and truck. The Committee will examine the pipeline permitting process, which involves agencies as varied as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of State, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The Committee will also consider the development of coal export facilities.

The Committee will also continue its broad investigation of the Department of Energy. This includes the Department's loan guarantee programs, the Office of Environmental Management, the National Nuclear Security Administration, and the agency's grants program for renewable energy.

## **Environment**

The Committee will continue to take an active role in overseeing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), specifically its implementation of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. The Committee will conduct this oversight with a focus on the effects on the consumer, federal interaction with state management processes, constitutionality, agency process, adequate economic analysis of proposed rules, and cumulative impact analysis. Further, the Committee will examine the effects these rules have on the health, safety, and economic well-being of American families, job creation, energy security, electricity generation, and the environment.

The Committee will carry on its oversight of the EPA's implementation of the Renewable Fuel Standard and its effect on consumers and businesses.

Additionally, the Committee will continue to monitor the Chemical Safety & Hazards Investigation Board, specifically its management, information sharing with other agencies, ability to retain employees, and investigative capabilities. It will also examine ideas for reform to ensure that the federal government is best able to carry out the goals and functions charged to the board.

## **Public Lands & Public Land Agencies**

The federal government owns roughly 28 percent of the 2.27 billion acres of land in the United States, with the vast majority concentrated in western states. The Committee will continue its broad study of federal land management, maintaining its focus on maintenance priorities, effects on states, return on investment, and the effect of litigation.

As part of this oversight of land management, the Committee will examine opportunities for reform of the Antiquities Act of 1906. The Committee will consider options to increase local and state authority in the monument designation process. The Committee will also review the suitability and selection procedure for previous designations.

The Committee will also continue oversight of the Department of the Interior's regulatory responsibilities. The focus will be the effect of the Department's regulatory and policy agenda and how these laws affect private landowners, small businesses, public land users, and the environment.

The Committee will also generally review the public land agencies' permitting and leasing programs to ensure fair application and that federal lands are open to multiple uses. This will focus on energy leasing projects, recreational permits, and the commercial permitting process.

Additionally, the Committee will conduct further examination of the Department of the Interior's implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to ensure that listings are made with the goal of recovering species and removing them from the list. Areas of ESA focus will include the litigation process, scientific independence and integrity, cost of compliance, and transparency of the listing process, including data used in decision making.

## **Federal Real Property**

The Committee will oversee implementation of the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act of 2016, Pub. L. 114-287, which was enacted on December 16, 2016. This key law establishes the Public Buildings Reform Board, a six-year board for identifying opportunities for cost savings and deficit reduction by reducing the federal government's inventory of civilian real property.

The Committee will also work to oversee implementation of the Federal Property Management Reform Act of 2016, Pub. L. 114-318, which codifies the Federal Real Property Council and increases reporting requirements related to real property for federal agencies.

## **Public Housing**

The Committee will examine overall costs associated with public housing throughout the country and territories, as well as the significant unmet need for public housing in the United States. Addressing management concerns within the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's public housing and low-income rental assistance programs is a priority for the Committee.

## **State and Local Affairs**

The Committee will conduct oversight of the relationship between the federal government and states and municipalities, as required by House Rule X, clause 4 (c)(1)(C). Key issues involve unfunded mandates, grants, and consultation with state and local governments in the federal policy- and rule-making process. The Committee will evaluate how the federal government collects and utilizes information from the state and local level to improve the routine consideration of specialized knowledge, interests, and input of stakeholders.

The Committee will seek to reauthorize the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA), which was designed to eliminate the imposition of unfunded federal mandates on state and local governments and strengthen the partnership between the federal government and state, local, and tribal governments. The law directs the Congressional Budget Office to estimate the compliance costs and effect on appropriations for financial assistance programs for certain unfunded mandates on both the public and private sector. The law also directs agencies to produce a written statement analyzing the effects of any rules likely to result in expenditure of \$100 million or more by state, local, or tribal governments, or the private sector, in any single year. Since its lapse in 2005, the Committee has conducted oversight of UMRA's effectiveness and proposals to strengthen the law to help achieve its original goals. To support its reauthorization, the Committee will continue to examine unfunded mandates and their effect on state and local governments, including an evaluation of specific laws and regulations that place particular weight and strain on state and local resources, as well as proposals to strengthen the underlying law.

The Committee will look to reauthorize the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) to address the increasing administrative burden of compliance with federal paperwork and regulatory requirements. The PRA governs the process of information collection and management by the federal government, and provides the public with the opportunity to comment on information collections. To facilitate this review and the reduction of the information collection burden, the PRA created the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), which also conducts review of significant regulations. The Committee will continue to evaluate ways to improve information collection by agencies and examine how such information would support meaningful analysis and evidence-based rulemaking while ensuring that federal activities do not place an undue burden on innovation and growth. The Committee will also examine how agencies safeguard and manage information.

## **Human Trafficking**

Trafficking in persons, or human trafficking, is a multi-billion dollar criminal industry that victimizes millions of people annually — both at home and abroad. In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee will initiate an investigation to move forward the global effort to combat this modern form of slavery. The Committee will work to better understand and expose the processes by which perpetrators facilitate their crimes, and subsequently ensure that federal programs, cutting across multiple agencies and aimed at deterring such activity, are sufficiently effective.

## **Federal Tax Accountability**

In Fiscal Year 2016, the federal government spent \$656 billion on grants and \$464 billion on contracts, for a combined total of \$1.12 trillion. Oversight of these funds is critical. The Committee will also focus on accountability for tax obligations by federal employees, contractors, and grant applicants. This effort will include increased oversight and focus on legislative reform. Oversight will include working with the GAO and inspectors general, and targeted requests to agencies to update the data and statistics highlighting the need for action. Legislative options include requiring contractors, grant applicants, and federal employees to certify they do not have delinquent tax debt and require agencies to refer contractors or grant applicants with delinquent tax debt to agency suspension and debarment officials.

## **Federal Firearms**

The Committee will continue oversight of federal firearms and ammunition inventory accounting and security. In recent years, a number of media reports highlighted instances whereby federal agencies lost firearms or failed to accurately secure them against theft or loss. The Committee will continue to review agency inventory accounting practices, and to hold accountable agencies that inadequately protect their firearms and ammunition inventories. The Committee will also review agency firearms, munitions, and related equipment purchasing. During the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Committee held a hearing, which revealed agencies that were incorrectly coding purchases of items as firearms and ammunition. As a result, agencies could not accurately determine the amount spent on firearms, ammunition, and related equipment. Failure to account for the initial purchase of firearms and ammunition can lead to later difficulties in accurately accounting for agency-held inventories of firearms and ammunition.

## **Railroad Retirement Board Disability Fraud**

The Committee will continue to investigate the disability program at the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) for potential fraud. The Committee will also work to ensure the RRB is implementing recommendations set forth by its Office of Inspector General.

## **Troubled Asset Relief Program**

The Committee will continue its investigation into the Troubled Asset Relief Program's (TARP) Hardest Hit Fund (HHF). In December 2015, the Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (SIGTARP) raised a variety of concerns regarding Treasury's management of the HHF Blight Elimination Program. SIGTARP expressed that the HHF Blight Elimination Program is vulnerable to substantial risks of unfair competitive practices and overcharging, potentially leading to fraud, waste and abuse. The Committee will continue its analysis into the management and effectiveness of the HHF Blight Elimination Program.

## **Criminal Justice Reform**

The Committee will examine the criminal justice system, including arrest and sentencing, incarceration, reentry programming, and support for formerly-incarcerated individuals returning to their communities. The Committee will explore ways the criminal justice system can be improved so that it is targeted, effective, and efficient in its pursuit of public safety while removing unnecessary burdens on individuals returning to their communities after incarceration. The Committee will seek to identify and remove inherent institutional biases, including biases on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and other categories.

On August 18, 2016, the Department of Justice announced its decision to no longer contract with private prisons. The Committee will monitor adherence to this new rule and work to ensure that the Bureau of Prisons better allocates federal resources to the safety of facilities and inmate access to quality rehabilitative services.