



June 26, 2019

Testimony of Federal Chief Information Officer Suzette Kent
House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
Subcommittee on Government Operations

Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Meadows, and Members of the Committee, thank you for having me here today.

I am honored to be here to discuss FITARA and technology topics that are of vital importance to safeguarding citizen information and enabling agencies to achieve their individual missions.

I know Congress and the CIO community are committed to these goals and as the Federal CIO and Chair of the CIO Council, I would like to convey my appreciation of your continued support for these efforts.

FITARA is more than just a law and a scorecard – it serves as vehicle for communicating evolving priorities and a method to capture progress. As such, it is a tool to empower Agency CIOs to drive priorities across their technology landscape and to demonstrate results achieved. When FITARA was passed in 2014, Congress made it clear that all Agency CIOs serve as a strategic partner in Agency leadership decisions regarding the lifecycle of technology capability including planning, budgeting, procurement, and service delivery. This Administration continues to emphasize their purpose through the IT Modernization Goal in the President’s Management Agenda and the President’s Executive Order on CIO authorities.

As worldwide technology capability rapidly evolves, so must Government technology, security, and IT policy. When I took on this role, I committed to agencies that the OMB OFCIO team will continuously update policies and metrics to remove barriers and better align agency IT resources with strategic goals. Our policies must be as nimble and iterative as the emerging technology products and the evolving nature the quality service expectations of citizens. This intent drove our policy updates in 2018 and 2019. Some of those policies were updated for the first time in over eight years. We have also sought to update how we measure success. The CIO Council provided recommendation to GAO and to House Oversight for enhancements of the scorecard. In addition, we are focused on making metrics and measures data-driven, continuous and publically available through websites. These achievements and interactions show the Administration is committed to working with Congress and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to drive stronger accountability and better outcomes government wide.

Cloud, Data Centers, and the Future of IT Modernization

We’ve made great strides in IT Modernization over the first two years of this Administration. A few examples include:

- Increased adoption of commercial cloud email from 45% to 72%,¹ representing nearly 1.8 million total mailboxes now in the cloud.
- 150 enterprise data centers were closed or consolidated as agencies rationalize their IT portfolios and move to commercial cloud providers.

¹ As of March 2019 (Source: Q1 2019 IDC).

- All 23 civilian CFO Act Agencies have hit the defined targets for data exfiltration detection and enhanced defense capabilities and twenty-one have met targets on mobile device security (*see details on performance.gov*)
- Through Technology Modernization Fund projects, we now have playbooks, and working strategies that can be easily replicated to allow agencies to move off legacy applications.

These are just a few achievements, but there are still barriers for agency modernization.

The recently released Cloud Smart Strategy addresses some of these barriers. After extensive discussions with agencies, we were able to identify three key areas that were preventing adoption of cloud technologies.

- The first is security - how do agencies move from a perimeter-based model to a data-centric model for security?
- The second is procurement – how do agencies adjust to consumption-based acquisition, where IT is more like a utility than a commodity?
- And last, building needed skills in the Federal workforce.

Also included in our Cloud Strategy is a directive for Agencies to develop an application rationalization roadmap. This roadmap will define what can move to a Cloud environment, what needs to be consolidated, and anticipates the need for future data center capabilities. Some Agencies are already doing this and it not only guides and accelerates their modernization efforts, but drive clarity for the Data Center path forward. The CIO Council has recently released the Application Rationalization Playbook to support the transformation planning activities.

The Cloud Strategy and the Data Center Optimization Initiative are a few of OMB strategies and policies that are enabling agencies to modernize the Federal IT landscape. We have recently released the, guidance on High Value Assets (HVAs), Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM), and the first ever Federal Data Strategy with a one year action plan. We are also working on policy to define the guideposts and controls for advancing use of automated technologies.

In May, three Agencies CIOs, policy leaders from OFCIO and I met with Congressional staff team members from OGR, HSGAC and House Homeland committees and provided perspectives and details on policy updates, both finals and those in draft.

I recognize Data Center Optimization Initiative is of importance to this Committee, so allow me to speak briefly on the vision of this new policy.

OMB closely studied the data collected under the original DCOI memo. Working with agencies, we gained a more clear understanding about closure process and the facility types that will continue to be needed for Agency mission-specific reasons. We included these learnings in the

updated policy which focuses on enabling aggressive closure and ensuring efficient operations where a data center is deemed to be a Key Mission Facility. We included this categorization as part of the revisions to drive two outcomes:

- 1.) Ensure that agencies maintain strong operating disciplines at Key Mission Facilities and
- 2.) Clarity of focus on closing those facilities which are not deemed as long-term mission critical.

IT Workforce

Last year when I testified to this Committee, I highlighted workforce challenges. My personal experiences across three decades of implementing technology solutions has made it clear to me that implementation and sustainment of modern technology capabilities requires continuous, commensurate investments in the workforce. As we consider any technology investment, we should remember that the people charged with acquiring, deploying and operating are ultimately the key to delivering value to the American people.

Today, over two million civilian personnel use technology in some way to better carry out their job. As the pace of capability and threat continues to accelerate, we must invest in our workforce to provide the experiences that they need to keep their skills relevant. In the technology space, this spans from the digital service experts who design new systems, the data scientists who provides high quality data, the operations managers who ensure vendors are delivering or the cybersecurity personnel who keep it all safe.

Next month, we will be celebrating the graduation of the individuals in our first Federal Cyber reskilling Academy cohort and will be kicking off our second cohort. These reskilling efforts are a way that we can invest in our current dedicated, qualified Federal employees to both enhance their career and address our workforce gaps. As the reskilling model continues to prove itself, we hope to replicate it for other critically-needed skill gaps. We need your continued support so that these types of initiatives become standard operating procedures, not one-time special projects.

As we transform our government, we must also be purposeful in developing a diverse IT workforce. We must do more to address the gaps in age, gender, race and ethnic diversity. This means that we must be more comprehensive in where and how we recruit, more flexible in pathways into service and more focused on building leadership in our current workforce.

As example, earlier this month, we held the second annual Women in Federal IT event where women in leadership positions across the government shared stories and provided on the spot mentorship and career advice to emerging leaders.

Continued coordination with Congress is key to effectively making our government modern, secure, and capable. The American people expect our Nation to be a world leader on every front, including technology capabilities and cybersecurity.

The FITARA scorecard is one of many ways we demonstrate that commitment. Agencies are making progress, but we recognize that modernization and addressing cybersecurity threats is a continuous journey. With the support of Congress, we will continue raising the bar on Agency performance and overall, empowering Agencies to leverage technology to enable mission, improve quality and be effective stewards of taxpayer resources.

I look forward to continuing our work with Congress, thank you again for this opportunity, and I look forward to answering your questions.