

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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MEMORANDUM

June 15, 2023

To: Members, Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Federal Workforce

From: Committee Staff

Re: Subcommittee hearing titled “Please Leave Your Message at the Tone: Addressing Post-Pandemic Backlogs and Delays at Federal Agencies”

On Wednesday, June 21, 2023, at 2:00 PM ET in 2154 Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Government Operation and the Federal Workforce will host a hearing titled “Please Leave Your Message at the Tone: Addressing Post-Pandemic Backlogs and Delays at Federal Agencies.”

I. BACKGROUND:

The work of federal agencies was significantly impacted as federal employees transitioned to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the more conspicuous interruptions to regular government operations were seen at customer-facing agencies. In many cases, outdated technology, staffing issues, and other factors combined to increase telephone wait times and create crippling document processing backlogs. Although the pandemic is now over, many of the same customer service problems agencies encountered in the past few years continue to frustrate the customer experience.

II. HEARING PURPOSE:

This hearing will examine ongoing customer service issues at select federal agencies to determine how to restore effective, responsive government services to Americans. Specifically, Members will be able to inquire about the ongoing document request backlog at the National Personnel Records Center; continued technology, backlog, and personnel issues facing the Social Security Administration; and the State Department’s growing challenges in resolving its passport application and renewal backlog.

III. WITNESSES:

Mr. Scott Levin

Director

National Personnel Records Center

Mr. Chad M. Poist

Deputy Commissioner for Budget, Finance, and Management

United States Social Security Administration

The Honorable Rena Bitter

Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs

United States Department of State