

House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Hearing, "Follow the Money: Oversight of President
Biden's Massive Spending Spree"
March 29, 2023
Opening Statement of Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers

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Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
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INFLATION and MASSIVE SPENDING

Thank you, Chair Griffith.

With every passing day, daily life gets more and more expensive for my constituents in Eastern Washington.

They join people and families across the country who are paying skyrocketing prices to put gas in their tank, stock their shelves with food, house their families, and pay their energy bills.

Inflation is spiraling out of control, thanks to President Biden's massive spending spree.

It began with the American Rescue Plan Act and continued to escalate with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Creating Helpful Incentives for Semiconductors or "CHIPS" and Science Act, and the so-called Inflation Recovery Act (IRA).

Most recently, the Administration has doubled down on its reckless spending with its latest \$6.8 trillion budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2024.

We've heard a lot about these so-called "historic" investments and "rush-to-green" agenda that the Administration plans to advance with hard earned taxpayer dollars.

QUESTIONS

We have many questions surrounding this massive spending spree that is making life unaffordable in America.

For example, how will agencies stand up dozens of new programs in a short period of time?

Do program offices, especially brand new ones, possess the necessary expertise and oversight mechanisms to make responsible investments in new projects?

How can American taxpayers learn more about how federal agencies are really spending their money?

How are conflicts of interest and political favoritism influencing agency funding decisions?

How will agencies address longstanding problems with programs that will now have even more funding to hand out?

How much of this money is being given to companies to build their products in China?

My colleagues and I on the committee are pushing for answers to these questions.

OVERSIGHT

Our constituents sent us to Congress to ask the hard questions and protect their hard-earned tax dollars.

They are frustrated with looking on as their federal government prints more money, doles out huge awards and incentives to preferred industries and favored political causes, all while they struggle to make ends meet every day.

However, I want to remind everyone at home—and our federal agencies—that my Republican colleagues and I are watching.

We stand ready to hold agencies—and their leadership—accountable for their spending decisions.

As Chair Griffith noted, our subcommittee chairs and I have already requested a full account of spending from our federal agencies, and will continue pushing for transparency in agencies' use of federal funds.

Inspectors General and the Government Accountability Office are integral parts of the federal oversight community, and we appreciate our witnesses joining us today.

We look forward to your testimony regarding the most serious challenges facing federal agencies; programs most vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse; and lessons learned from previous failures that Congress and agencies can apply to prevent future mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

We also appreciate this opportunity to learn more about your upcoming work and difficulties you must confront in conducting oversight of ballooning agency budgets.

We plan to use the information we gather today to prioritize our oversight efforts, pinpoint federal programs that demand more scrutiny, and identify how to stop wasteful spending,

ARTICLE 1

We have a lot of hard work ahead of us given this unprecedented funding boost to many of the agencies under the committee's jurisdiction.

However, my colleagues and I will not shy away from this challenge, and we hope we can count on our colleagues across the aisle to partner with us.

Responsible stewardship of federal funds should not be a partisan issue.

As duly-elected members of the People's House, it is our Article 1 responsibility to conduct oversight so the government is responsive to those we serve.

We cannot let the American people become irrelevant to a growing bureaucracy that recklessly prints and spends records amounts of money.

Federal agencies must implement the law as it was written by Congress, the elected representatives of the American people.

Again, members on both sides of the aisle share a responsibility to monitor these activities.

I look forward to our discussion today, and I thank our witnesses for being here.