



**Chairman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.**  
**Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration**  
**and Related Agencies**  
**Budget Hearing: USDA Office of Inspector General**  
**Date: February 11, 2020**

The Subcommittee will come to order.

Good morning and welcome to today's hearing. Welcome, everyone, to the Subcommittee's first hearing of the calendar year. Thank you to our witnesses, Ms. Fong, Ms. Coffey, Mr. Harden, and Mr. Paradis, for appearing before us.

I have a strong interest in your work and in what you do. We have to do everything that we can possibly do to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse, and mismanagement. We need to ensure that all of the USDA programs, over which our subcommittee has oversight, are operated with the best possible efficiencies in order to create the best possible outcome for those who use the agency.

As I mentioned at last year's hearing, I have concerns about the number of audit recommendations that remain open and the agencies' efforts to close them out. Your last Semiannual Report shows 351 recommendations still pending corrective actions, some as old as 1996.

On the investigations side, it looks like the OIG Hotline has had a busy year, with the number of complaints having increased by more than 35 percent over 2018.

So today, I would like to hear more about your plans to conduct adequate oversight of USDA programs and the challenges you face in ensuring agreed-upon recommendations are implemented and complaints are appropriately addressed.

In addition, I want to ensure that whistleblower and civil rights issues are getting thoughtful and proper attention throughout the USDA.

I look forward to discussing that with you as well as other important issues, and I want to say again that we appreciate you and all OIG staff for all that you do.