

Authorization and Oversight Plan
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
U.S. House of Representatives
118th Congress

Under clause 2(d) of House Rule X, the Chair of each Committee is required to adopt and submit to the Committees on Oversight and Accountability and House Administration an authorization and oversight plan not later than March 1 of the first session of Congress.

This following is the authorization and oversight plan of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability. The Committee will conduct oversight and investigations pursuant to its legislative and oversight jurisdiction under Rule X.

The Committee's mission is to ensure the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of the federal government and all its agencies. The following 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 118th Congress, and work to enact necessary authorizations and reforms. These include the Merit Systems Protection Board; the National Archives Historical Publications and Records Commission; the Office of Government Ethics; and the DC Tuition Assistance Grant Program.

Expiring Authorizations this Congress

The Committee will consider expiring authorizations in its jurisdiction in the 118th Congress, and work to enact necessary authorization and reforms. These include: the Scholarships for

Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act—which provides scholarships to students in Washington, DC—expires September 30, 2023; the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), whose authorization expires September 30, 2023; and the Office of Special Counsel (OSC), whose authorization expires September 30, 2023.

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. 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. Furthermore, the Committee will continue to examine the scope of and reasons for unprecedented levels of fraud and improper payments in COVID-relief programs. It will offer targeted legislative proposals that proactively address identified waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement.

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 serves the needs of this nation. The Committee will ensure expanded telework and remote work policies do not adversely affect agency performance and achievement of mission. The federal hiring process must be competitive, merit-based, technology-based, and conducted in a cost-effective manner.

Federal Regulation and the Regulatory Process

While some federal regulations are necessary to effectively implement the laws that Congress passes, federal regulations can also impose significant burdens on industry, affecting the Nation's economic growth. 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 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 April 2023, the GAO will issue its biennial “High Risk List” report, which identifies government programs that are particularly vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement, or are in need of transformation. 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.

Inspectors General

The Committee will continue to work closely with the inspectors general to ensure they have the tools needed to effectively perform their important oversight and investigative work. The Committee intends to help inspectors general ensure accountability from their respective agencies. The Committee will also consider the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee (PRAC), which is set to terminate on September 30, 2025. The Committee will review the potential need to extend the PRAC beyond that date, including the existing centralized data analytics unit within the PRAC—the Pandemic Analytics Center of Excellence—to ensure continued efforts to prevent, identify, and combat fraud in federal programs.

GSA Real Property Disposal

The management of Federal real property has been on GAO’s High-Risk list since 2003 because it can take years to sell or otherwise dispose of unneeded government properties, which can require millions of dollars of taxpayer funds to maintain. The Committee will examine the results to date of the pilot programs authorized by the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act of 2016, which was intended to achieve cost savings by expediting property sales through new mechanisms, including a temporary Public Buildings Reform Board. With the Administration emphasizing permanent, expanded telework and remote policies, the Committee will ensure the

federal real property footprint aligns with evolving workforce needs and agency mission demands.

Whistleblower Protection

The Committee will maintain its efforts related to the protection of whistleblowers in the federal government. The Committee will continue to work directly with whistleblowers, including those who make disclosures of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement to the Committee. The Committee will continue to advance policies that protect federal employees' rights, and those of federal contractors and other recipients of financial assistance, to communicate directly with Congress and to ensure such 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.

Federal Financial Management

The Committee will examine federal financial management. The Committee will focus on agency efforts to reduce improper payments, ensure payment integrity and proper accounting practices, and achieve an unqualified audit opinion for the federal government. The CFO Act as amended requires federal agencies to prepare agency-wide financial statements that undergo outside audit. To date, GAO has been unable to issue an audit opinion on the consolidated, government-wide financial statements, in part due to serious financial management problems at the Department of Defense. In particular, the Committee will focus on overseeing the Department of Defense'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.

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. 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 and ensure programmatic and mission success. 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 or is not instituting mechanisms to ensure sufficient competition. The Committee will also promote the establishment of transparency requirements at the point of award to achieve the necessary levels of oversight throughout the life cycle of federal contracts to prevent waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement.

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 will also focus on ensuring greater efficiency for the post-award reporting requirements of recipients of federal financial assistance and better visibility into the use of federal financial assistance in order to combat fraud and abuse.

Cybersecurity and Data Privacy

The Committee will continue to conduct oversight of the increasing number of cyberattacks impacting federal agencies and the private sector. The Committee intends to examine ways to ensure that agencies and corporate entities take appropriate steps to protect private- and public-sector networks and information systems that are critical to the nation's infrastructure and security, and the personal information of all Americans. The Committee also will continue its oversight of government-wide cybersecurity standards, policies, systems, and tools established or implemented by the Executive Branch to protect federal information systems.

Information Technology and Management

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 address IT systems and projects that are not achieving their intended purpose, streamline those that are wasteful, rework those that are failing to deliver value on time and under budget, and work to ensure that costly, failing legacy systems are decommissioned. The Committee will explore legislative reforms to ensure that federally maintained information technology can be readily tied to agency funding accounts and relevant contract awards, as well as agency programs and strategic mission goals which are supported by these IT investments.

Open Government and Transparency

The Committee will continue to advocate for data-driven solutions for increasing transparency and accountability throughout the federal government. The Committee will evaluate possible legislation to set policy goals that better harmonize reporting obligations and achieve data-driven transparency around federal agency programmatic organization and performance, regulatory procedures and information collections, spending and financial management, and evidence-informed policymaking.

United States Postal Service

The Committee will monitor implementation of the recently enacted Postal Service Reform Act (PSRA), which was intended to facilitate the ability of the U.S. Postal Service to achieve long-term operational independence and financial sustainability in the wake of declining mail volume. The Committee will continue to track the financial performance of the Postal Service, to see if the law is working as intended. It will also oversee OPM's administration of the new Postal Service Health Benefit program created by the PSRA, which is to be created within the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) program. In addition, the Committee will continue to monitor the Postal Service's ability to deliver the mail expeditiously.

Government of the District of Columbia

The Committee will review the District of Columbia's use of federal dollars to fund its activities. 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 continue its oversight of the District consistent with its plenary authority granted by the Constitution.

National Archives and Federal Records

The Committee will continue its oversight of the National Archives and Records Administration's (NARA) management of government records and ongoing records processing backlogs. This oversight includes how NARA preserves records, including classified records, at the end of a presidential administration.

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 lead and oversee executive branch ethics programs by making and interpreting ethics laws and regulations, advising on and interpreting ethics laws, supporting ethics training, and monitoring compliance. The Committee will continue to ensure OGE operates in a manner consistent with its mission of providing clear and impartial ethics guidance to federal agencies. The Committee will also consider reauthorization of OGE, whose statutory authorization lapsed in 2007.

Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic

H. Res. 5 sets forth the oversight jurisdiction of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic. Topics for oversight include, but are not limited to, the origins of the coronavirus pandemic and how the federal government responded to the coronavirus pandemic so that the United States can prevent and prepare for future pandemics.