



April 26, 2022

Subcommittee on Government Operations
US House of Representatives
Committee on Government Oversight and Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6143

To the Honorable Members of the Subcommittee on Government Operations:

Thank you for the honor of inviting me to testify before you as part of the March 31, 2022 hearing "Follow the Money: Tackling Improper Payments".

Please find attached the answers to post-hearing questions posed to Scott Jensen, Chief Executive Officer and Vice President of External Affairs of Research Improving People's Lives, by Chairman Gerald E. Connolly.

If I, or my staff, can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Jensen", is written over the word "Sincerely,". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Scott Jensen
Chief Executive Officer
Vice President of External Affairs
Research Improving People's Lives

Enclosure

cc: Mintaka Angell, Chief Operations Officer
Abby McQuade, Director of Consultancies
Research Improving People's Lives

POST-HEARING QUESTION RESPONSES OF SCOTT JENSEN, CEO OF RESEARCH IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES, TO THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, REGARDING HIS TESTIMONY "GENUINE MODERNIZATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AFTER THE PANDEMIC", PRESENTED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS DURING THE HEARING "FOLLOW THE MONEY: TACKLING IMPROPER PAYMENTS" HELD ON MARCH 31, 2022

The below questions were all posed by Chairman Gerald E. Connolly.

1. **Question: How can the federal government and states help each other better understand and adapt to the people we all seek to serve?**

Answer: The federal government can revisit data use rules – both between states and between the federal government and the states – to not just allow better customer services and fraud prevention but to mandate that data be used for these purposes. The “time tax” not only harms citizens but it makes it extremely hard for federal partners (e.g., state governments) to do their job(s).

2. **Question: Can you provide an example of how technology can help the government reduce fraud while also providing benefits to those who need government assistance?**

Answer: Data can be jointly used on the cloud in smart ways but does not need to be “shared”, as traditionally understood. For example, to administer the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (“PUA”) program in Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training verified the federal adjusted gross income (“AGI”) of applicants against the most recent tax year’s personal income tax filing made by each applicant/claimant. Partnered with Research Improving People’s Lives and Amazon Web Services, we were able to use the Department’s cloud-based Research Data Lake to house PUA application data provided by the claimant in a Secure Data Enclave. Rhode Island Department of Revenue, Division of Taxation (“Taxation”) data was housed in its own Secure Data Enclave. Modern technology enabled us to share information (whether the claimant’s AGI matched Taxation records or not) with Taxation without either agency needing to openly share or even let the other agency see their respective data.

Modern technology enabled Rhode Island to reduce PUA fraud by verifying claimant-provided information and calculating the appropriate benefit level for each PUA beneficiary. Both agencies were able to preserve the integrity of their data, while still facilitating the processing of PUA applications quickly and efficiently, allowing Rhode Island to be the first state in the country to make its PUA application available to its unemployed workers and the second state in the country to pay PUA benefits.

3. **Question: In Rhode Island, did you work with other states to ensure the same person did not receive unemployment insurance from more than one state, and if so will you describe your experience?**

Answer: We did, and the experience was miserable. To begin with, the interpretations of whether and how data can be used by other states are typically very restrictive. There is a downside to cooperating with other states, as it is easy for government program administrators to easily imagine the many things that can go wrong while the benefits are reasonably abstract. (I would

argue that it is up to the federal government to change this incentive structure, empowering states to work cooperatively and collectively, where appropriate.) Additionally, the established data exchange portals through which the states do communicate are old technology (and in some cases rely on literal hand processing). During the pandemic, these portals simply did not work as even originally intended. Given our experiences during the height of the pandemic, it is relatively easy for me to state that those existing information exchanges would once again break down in the next severe recession (as they indeed did during the Great Recession, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic).