

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051
<http://oversight.house.gov>

Opening Statement
Rep. Robin Kelly, Ranking Member
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on Information Technology

Joint Hearing on “The Federal Information Technology
Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) Scorecard 4.0”
Subcommittees on Information Technology and Government Operations

June 13, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you Chairman Meadows and Ranking Member Connolly for the leadership you’ve shown as our Subcommittees continue working together to oversee federal information technology (IT) systems.

Key to this oversight has been the scorecard our Subcommittees have developed for grading agency progress in fulfilling the requirements of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act, or FITARA.

The latest FITARA scorecard shows that President Trump’s hiring freeze and plan for imposing deep workforce reductions to agencies may have already begun to reverse the gains many agencies had been making under the prior administration.

In January, President Trump ordered a freeze on the hiring of Federal civilian employees, preventing agencies from filling vacancies or creating new positions. This past April, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a new directive mandating that agencies reduce their civilian workforce. Under the OMB directive, agencies are now required to, and I quote, “Begin taking immediate actions to achieve near-term workforce reductions.”

The President’s plan for reducing the federal workforce would make it even more difficult for agencies to hire the most skilled, tech-savvy workforce needed to fully implement FITARA. This past March, our Subcommittees held a hearing on the challenges the federal government is facing in federal IT acquisition, and heard from some of the leading IT experts in the private sector. Many of these experts agreed that one of the most critical challenges to modernizing government IT operations is the need to hire more IT professionals.

As the new scorecard shows, several agencies have hit roadblocks, and some like the Department of Health and Human Services, which is here today, continue to fall behind in

meeting the requirements of FITARA. Forcing these agencies to make across-the-board cuts to their workforces, on top of the hiring freeze, could make it more difficult for them to fulfill the requirements of FITARA.

It wasn't always this way. Prior scorecards showed steady progress among agencies. But for the first time since our Committee began measuring compliance, the new scorecard shows that overall agency progress has stalled under the Trump Administration. More specifically, the new scorecard indicates that the grades of only four agencies improved, 15 agencies had no improvement whatsoever, and the grades for five agencies actually went down. In contrast, when the Subcommittees released their scorecard this past December, three times as many agencies showed improvement in their scores, and only one agency had a decrease in their grades.

The new scorecard highlights the fact that the Trump Administration's federal workforce policies are harmful and counterproductive.

As I pointed out at the hearing our Subcommittees held this past December on FITARA, I hope there will be bipartisan interest in holding the Trump Administration to the same high standards to which we held the last administration.

I want to thank the witnesses for testifying today. Your background, expertise, and recommendations will be helpful to our Subcommittees as we look for ways to strengthen the federal government's capabilities in the area of IT acquisitions and operations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Contact: Jennifer Hoffman Werner, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181.