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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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### Opening Statement

#### Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

#### Oversight and Government Reform Committee

#### H.R. 3316, the GRANT Act

October 29, 2013

I support the goals of the GRANT Act and I believe this bill is well intentioned. Grant applicants deserve a fair and transparent process. The American people also deserve to know how their money is being spent.

This bill, however, has some significant problems. Last Congress, Representative Connolly and I, as well as other Members, raised concerns about some of these issues.

The majority has made changes to the bill aimed at addressing those concerns. However, there are still several problems that need to be fixed.

One serious issue that needs to be addressed before this bill moves forward is a provision that would require agencies to disclose the employer of every peer reviewer.

Peer reviewers are used by agencies to help review grant applications and recommend which applicants should be awarded grants. It is imperative that these reviewers be unbiased. Exposing the identity of a reviewer could jeopardize the reviewer's ability to make decisions free from pressure or influence.

I understand Rep. Pocan will offer an amendment that would only require agencies to disclose a unique identifier for each peer reviewer rather than any information that could be used to expose their identity.

I also understand that Mr. Connolly may offer an amendment to address some of the administrative burdens this bill could place on grant recipients.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that we can work cooperatively to improve this bill. It has good potential but it needs changes before it can become good law.

Thank you, I yield back the balance of my time.