

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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<http://oversight.house.gov>

October 6, 2016

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

In fiscal year 2015, the federal government spent over \$439 billion purchasing services and goods. More than 60 percent of federal acquisition dollars are spent on acquiring services. The federal acquisition system is an area ripe for oversight and potential reform. Experts have raised concerns that the system has become increasingly burdensome, it fails to leverage commercial best practices and promote innovation, and also lacks the proper incentives to drive successful outcomes.¹

In an effort to leverage past reform efforts and examine future reforms, we request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) review the implementation status of the 89 recommendations from the 2007 Report of the Acquisition Advisory Panel.² The Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003 established the Advisory Panel and directed the Panel “to review laws and regulations regarding the use of commercial practices, performance-based contracting, performance of acquisition functions across agency lines of responsibility, and the use of government-wide contracts.”³

In December 2007, GAO provided this Committee with a report on the implementation status of these recommendations.⁴ Please update this assessment in order to inform future congressional action on acquisition policy. Specifically, GAO’s update should address the following questions:

1. What are the key findings and recommendations in each of the areas the Advisory Panel reviewed?

¹ See generally, U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Com. on Homeland Sec. and Govt. Affairs, *Defense Acquisition Reform: Where Do We Go from Here? A Compendium of Views by Leading Experts*, Staff Report (Oct. 2014).

² *Report of the Acquisition Advisory Panel to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy and the United States Congress* (Jan. 2007).

³ Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003 (SARA), P.L. 108-136, 117 Stat. 1663, 1669 (2003).

⁴ Gov’t Accountability Office, GAO-08-160, *Oversight Plan Needed to Help Implement Acquisition Advisory Panel Recommendations* (Dec. 2007).

2. What progress has been made in implementing the Advisory Panel's recommendations, particularly on recommendations for congressional action?
3. What mechanisms exist to track the implementation of the Panel's recommendations?
4. Should any of the Advisory Panel recommendations that have not yet been implemented be prioritized to improve Information Technology acquisition practices to expedite these types of acquisitions and leverage cutting edge technology?
5. Have there been unintended negative consequences as a result of implementing any of these recommendations that should be reexamined?
6. In what ways has the acquisition environment changed since the Advisory Panel released its report?
7. Given the acquisition environment in 2016 and the Advisory Panel recommendations, are there gap areas that should be addressed by similar panels in future reviews?

Please contact Julie Dunne of the Majority staff at (202) 225-5074 or Mark Stephenson of the Minority staff at (202) 226-2510 with any questions about this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



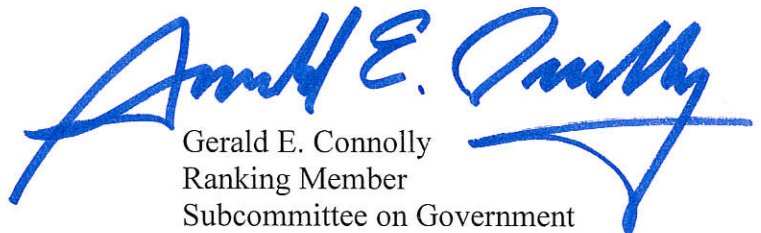
Jason Chaffetz
Chairman



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member



Mark Meadows
Chairman
Subcommittee on Government
Operations



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Government
Operations