

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

December 13, 2017

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

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We are writing to request the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) continue to assist the Committee with oversight of the over \$90 billion the federal government annually spends on information technology (IT) and agencies' implementation of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA).<sup>1</sup>

In February 2015, GAO added "Improving the Management of IT Acquisitions and Operations" to its biannual High Risk list.<sup>2</sup> GAO found the government spent billions on failed and poorly performing IT investments. In order to resolve the IT Acquisition high risk designation, GAO has said that "expeditious" FITARA implementation is critical to IT acquisition reform.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the Committee has spent considerable time overseeing the federal government's IT spending and implementation of FITARA. The Committee has held multiple hearings to assess agencies' FITARA implementation efforts and released five FITARA scorecards measuring performance.

The Committee has also supplemented IT oversight with legislation to encourage transitioning federal government legacy IT systems to modernized solutions. The GAO has reported that over 75 percent of IT spending is on legacy systems that are becoming increasingly obsolete.<sup>4</sup> On May 18, 2017, the House agreed to the bipartisan Modernizing Government Technology (MGT) Act (HR 2227). The MGT Act was included in the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act. This new law will incentivize federal agencies to modernize legacy IT. Under MGT, savings obtained by agencies streamlining IT systems, replacing legacy products, and transitioning to cloud computing can be placed in a working capital fund to support modernizing IT. The working capital fund is available for up to three years for further modernization efforts. This solution eliminates the traditional "use-it or lose-it" approach that has plagued government technology for decades. As with

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<sup>1</sup> National Defense Authorization Act FY 2015, Pub. L. No. 113-291, Title VIII, Subtitle D (Dec. 19, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> 2015 GAO High Risk Report, GAO-15-290 (Feb. 2015).

<sup>3</sup> 2015 GAO High Risk Report at "What Remains to be Done" available at

[http://www.gao.gov/highrisk/improving\\_management\\_it\\_acquisitions\\_operations/why\\_did\\_study#t=2](http://www.gao.gov/highrisk/improving_management_it_acquisitions_operations/why_did_study#t=2)

<sup>4</sup> GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-16-696T, FEDERAL AGENCIES NEED TO ADDRESS AGING LEGACY SYSTEMS (May 2016).

FITARA, the Committee intends to conduct oversight to ensure effective implementation of the MGT Act.

In order to support our continuing IT modernization oversight efforts and further inform the Committee's FITARA Scorecard, the Committee requests that GAO undertake five new IT-related reviews:

1. Identify FITARA implementation best practices, particularly from those agencies that have received high grades and/or have demonstrated significant grade improvements;
2. Evaluate agencies' implementation of the Portfolio Review requirements in FITARA to ensure agencies are eliminating duplicative systems;
3. Identify and evaluate the top 15-25 mission critical IT acquisitions for the nation and report on the status of each of these IT acquisitions;
4. Identify and evaluate the top 10 legacy systems modernization initiatives for the nation and top 10 modernization successes in the last five years; and
5. Evaluate the current state of IT human capital, and identify challenges, strategies for success, as well as recommendations for improvement, in each of the major 24 federal agencies (which would follow up on previous GAO IT Workforce work).<sup>5</sup>

Please contact Julie Dunne of the Majority staff at 202-225-5074, or Sean Perryman of the Minority staff at 202-225-5051, with any questions about this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.



Trey Gowdy

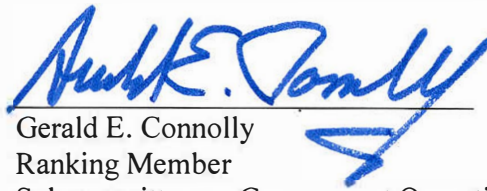
Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings



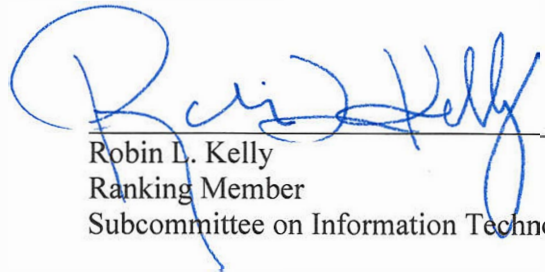
Mark Meadows  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Government Operations



Gerald E. Connolly  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations



Will Hurd  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Information Technology



Robin L. Kelly  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Information Technology

<sup>5</sup> GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE, GAO-17-8, IT WORKFORCE: KEY PRACTICES HELP ENSURE STRONG INTEGRATED PROGRAM TEAMS: SELECTED DEPARTMENTS NEED TO ASSESS SKILLS GAP (Nov. 2016).