

STATEMENT OF SENATOR SCOTT BROWN, RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION, FEDERAL SERVICES, AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
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Hearing on

“Examining the President's Plan for Eliminating Wasteful Spending in Information Technology”

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Senator Carper, thank you for holding this important hearing today. During times of economic hardship, the private sector innovates and finds new ways to operate smarter, faster, and cheaper. Yet responsible fiscal policy demands the government do the same in good times or bad. Accordingly, federal agencies and departments have increasingly looked towards information technology (IT) to modernize and enhance their administrative and operational functions. As you can see in the bar graph behind me, in just the last ten years, government spending on IT has risen from just over \$46 billion in 2001 to nearly \$80 billion in fiscal year 2011. As the government becomes more dependent on technology to conduct its daily business, the proportion of the federal budget going towards IT is anticipated to rise. This is why as agencies go on to make new investments, appropriate acquisition policy and guidance must be firmly in place. Effective oversight and accountability must be ensured. As our witnesses will point out today, however, the federal government continues to struggle with these issues month after month, year after year.

Mr. Chairman, I know this is an issue that this subcommittee has continually focused on, and with good reason. New investments in software and IT infrastructure are supposed to streamline processes, create government efficiencies, and reduce costs. Yet, many of these programs, in fact, do the opposite. Whether it's the Census Bureau's hand-held devices, or the

Archives Electronic Record's system, or Homeland Security's SBInet – we keep hearing about mismanaged IT programs incurring years of schedule delays and hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars, in cost overruns. GAO and others point out time and time again that misaligned priorities, poor requirements management, and inadequate oversight continue to plague these investments. Unfortunately, the impact of these delays and cost overruns reach farther than just an individual agency's bottom-line. They have a significant impact on important long-term policy goals government-wide.

For example, take the Department of Defense's financial improvement efforts. DoD has never received a department-wide financial audit. They are pushing aggressively to be audit ready by 2017. Yet reaching that deadline is dependent on upgrades to financial systems at all of the services. As GAO has testified before, most of these systems are years behind schedule and will be billions of dollars over total cost when all is said and done. While many of them are "back on track", any further schedule delays will make meeting the 2017 deadline virtually impossible. We cannot afford for wayward IT projects to impact these important reform efforts in the future.

Thankfully, some significant steps have been taken to address some of the most pressing problems. OMB has created oversight tools, such as the IT Dashboard, to provide Congress and the public better insight into IT project performance. In addition, agencies are being held more accountable. OMB has reviewed a significant number of major projects and, in several cases, canceled or significantly restructured the most problematic programs. To Mr. Kundra's credit, OMB's 25 point reform plan for federal IT is a positive step in the right direction. It seems to address some long-standing program management issues while also taking advantage of key trends and innovations taking place in the private sector.

I am encouraged by these efforts, but much more work remains to be done. There is no doubt that government can leverage the expertise of the private sector in better ways. More attention can be focused on lessons-learned and using best practices both inside and outside government. For our part, I, along with Chairman Carper and Senators Lieberman and Collins are working on legislation to codify some of the recent OMB initiatives, such as the IT Dashboard. The *Information Technology Investment Management Act* will ensure that these effective oversight measures last beyond the current Administration. Considering the amount of money being spent on IT, senior leadership accountability and ownership over these projects must be a continuing top priority. This legislation will go a long way to make certain it is, now, and into the future.

I am amazed by the potential for new technologies not only to streamline government operations, but also expand citizen participation like never before. No doubt, there are both many opportunities and challenges associated with bringing the federal government into the 21st Century. Our witnesses today play a big role in pushing us ahead. Their efforts do not go unnoticed. I thank them for their service and look forward to an engaging discussion.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.