



T O M C A R P E R

UNITED STATES SENATOR · DELAWARE



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**SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION, FEDERAL SERVICES, AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

**HEARING: "Removing the Shroud of Secrecy: Making Government More
Transparent and Accountable Part II"**

Opening Statement of Senator Thomas R. Carper, Chairman

My thanks to our guests and witnesses for being here today. For the next hour or so we are going to discuss ways that President Obama and his team of "Open Government" experts can reshape old and inefficient bureaucratic agencies into lean, mean, citizen-focused machines. We had hoped to hear from our panel of witnesses today a few weeks ago, but there were larger issues at play and unfortunately we had to take a rain check.

But before the hearing ended early last month we were able to hear from the Administration's top officials leading the Open Government Initiative. I applaud the Administration for releasing guidance to reduce wasteful agency spending, make senior leaders more accountable, and improve the lives of everyday Americans. It shouldn't be a talking point any more that agencies should be as transparent and accountable as possible. Change needs to start at the top.

Now that we have an opportunity to hear from our panel of outside experts I hope to finish the discussion we started a few weeks ago and learn what areas the Administration is doing well, what areas may need some more attention; and more importantly, how making agencies more open and transparent will make the lives of 300 million Americans better.

Just to recap why this hearing is important, every year agencies spend nearly one trillion dollars on contracts, grants, and loans. Yet it seems like every week or so we receive another report from outside watchdogs like the Government Accountability Office or an agency Inspector General outlining significant wasteful and inefficient spending.

At a time when everyday Americans are trying to keep from losing their job or from foreclosing their home, the federal government should lead by example and not by exception.

I like to tell my staff, "If it isn't perfect, make it better." I believe that phrase can also be applied here. There is more that both the Administration and Congress can do to make sure we are spending Americans' hard-earned tax dollars wisely and we need to work together to get it done. The American people demand it.

In closing, then, I'll add that, as we discuss all of the new and exciting initiatives that the Administration has underway - or plans on undertaking in the near future - we should keep our eye on the ball.

Our job doesn't just end at making information freely available, but in making sure the information can be effectively used to improve services to every American, reduce wasteful spending, and enforce accountability.

Again, my thanks to our witnesses for taking their time to be here today and for sharing their ideas on this important issue.

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