

Chairman Peters Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery
Full Committee Hearing: Putting People First: Building Trust in Government through
Customer Experience
June 23, 2022

I'd like to thank our witnesses for joining us. The purpose of today's hearing is to examine customer experience strategies in the federal government and discuss how government can more effectively deliver critical services and benefits to the American people.

Customer experience has always remained a top priority in the private sector, with many leading companies working to better understand their customers, provide more effective digital services, and increase profits.

Profit incentives do not drive federal agencies, instead, they are driven by their mission to effectively serve taxpayers and make government work efficiently, including by reducing waste and saving taxpayer dollars.

This important responsibility requires the federal government to continuously look for ways to modernize its information technology, better assess how agencies perform for their customers, and deliver programs and services in a way that increases satisfaction and trust for the people receiving services.

Rebuilding trust in our government is essential, and we can help restore the public's confidence in the federal government by continuing to strengthen its ability to deliver critical services, whether its assistance people count on like social security checks or unemployment benefits, or scheduling appointments for critical services like VA health care.

Restoring decades of lost faith is a monumental task, and I am pleased the Administration has made enhancing customer experience a top priority by encouraging federal agencies to modernize programs, reduce administrative burdens, and launch new online tools to provide a seamless and secure customer experience.

However, these efforts must also include examining past setbacks that resulted in service delays, which offer valuable knowledge to help agencies elevate customer experience to a level of primary importance, strengthen accountability, and deliver better results across the board.

For example, I have recently heard from small business owners in my home state of Michigan who have run into issues accessing the System for Award Management or SAM.gov, the government-wide registration system for federal funding awards.

Recent changes created unexpected challenges for companies seeking to register for federal contracting opportunities. I had the chance to speak with General Services Administrator (GSA) Robin Carnahan about this recently, and I was pleased to hear that thanks to the swift work of GSA's Technology Transformation Service, many of these initial setbacks are now being addressed.

I will continue to conduct oversight of these challenges, and stay in contact with both GSA and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to ensure that the problem is fully resolved and that small businesses are paid for their work and able to pursue new opportunities.

Along with these measures, GSA and OMB are also taking timely efforts to dramatically improve government-wide customer experience by designating \$100 million from the Technology Modernization Fund to help secure and modernize government technology and improve online access to government services.

Once implemented, these reforms have the potential to not only improve the ability of federal agencies to deliver modern, effective digital services to citizens, but to also improve taxpayer satisfaction with the government.

As Chairman, I have pressed for robust resources to improve the customer experience and promote government efficiency and accountability, most recently by passing my bipartisan *Federal Agency Performance Act* out of this Committee last month. This bill seeks to provide lawmakers and the Administration, with the necessary tools and data to measure and evaluate the performance of federal agencies and ensure they are meeting their long-term strategic goals.

This bill, along with other bipartisan efforts to address some of the key barriers to effective federal service delivery, are an important step, but there is more Congress can do to implement proven, effective solutions by government agencies.

Today I am pleased to be joined by our panel of non-governmental, expert witnesses who can discuss how we can better address this well-known problem, so the federal government can improve its ability to deliver valuable customer services to Americans more quickly, securely, and effectively.