

Opening Statement for Chairman Ron Johnson
“Duplication, Waste, and Fraud in Federal Programs”
Wednesday, April 26, 2017

As prepared for delivery:

Good morning and welcome. I want to start by thanking Gene Dodaro and the staff at the Government Accountability Office who work tirelessly to oversee our government and hold it accountable on behalf of the American people.

Every year this Committee holds a hearing to highlight duplicative, wasteful spending by the federal government. This important annual report began as a simple amendment filed by then-Senator Coburn during the 2010 debt ceiling fight, requiring GAO to report annually on government duplication and waste.

Seven years later—with only half of GAO's recommendations even implemented—GAO estimates that this report has resulted in actual savings of \$75 billion. One simple idea has saved American taxpayers tens of billions of dollars.

However, there are still hundreds of recommendations that have not been implemented, and far too many areas of duplication remaining in the federal government that should be addressed. I am pleased that the Trump administration is taking this problem seriously. The Executive Order signed by President Trump and the memorandum by Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney that followed will result in a plan to reorganize and streamline the federal government and help it better serve the American people. This is long overdue.

I sincerely hope we can come together, Democrats and Republicans, and use the bipartisan nature of this Committee to assist the administration in finding areas of agreement to root out waste, fraud, and duplication in the federal government.

Today we will focus on three key issues from this year's report: Inspector General J. Russell George is here to discuss the billions wasted through our flawed system of refundable tax credits; UW Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank will highlight the regulatory burden we place on research universities that slows down our race to cure diseases and wastes money; and Mr. Keith Repko will explain the VA's challenges in building new facilities despite spending more than \$14 billion on construction over the last ten years.

Thank you again to the Government Accountability Office and all of our witnesses today.