

**Opening Statement of Chairman Rand Paul**  
**July 15, 2026**

In my office, I keep a clock that measures our national debt in real time. This morning that clock stood at nearly \$40 trillion.

Washington taxes the American people. Washington borrows against our grandchildren's future earnings. Then Washington sends billions of dollars out the door—often without knowing who receives it, if any service was performed, or even if the business exists.

The federal government loses hundreds of billions of dollars to fraud every year. And when the money disappears, politicians act surprised. No private business could survive this way.

A bank confirms an account exists before wiring money. A credit-card company flags suspicious charges in seconds. An insurance company verifies that the patient exists and the treatment occurred before paying a claim. They verify first because it is their money on the line.

But when the money belongs to the taxpayer, Washington pays first and asks questions later—if it asks them at all.

Our first witness, Nick Shirley, decided to see for himself. In Minneapolis, he visited supposed daycare centers that had collected millions of dollars from taxpayers. He found industrial buildings with blacked-out windows. No playgrounds. No children. No employees. No one answering the door.

These were not complicated accounting irregularities buried deep inside a federal database. The question was obvious: What exactly are taxpayers paying for?

Mr. Shirley found the same warning signs at autism centers, home-health companies, and other providers collecting large government reimbursements.

In California, he found hospice and health-care companies stacked into a single office complex some marked by nothing more than a sheet of printer paper taped to a door. Many could not answer basic questions about their own patients.

A private insurer would have stopped payment. The federal government kept writing the checks.

Prosecutors have now charged 15 people in Minnesota for schemes involving more than \$90 million. One autism-services scheme alone is \$46.6 million. The Justice Department calls it the largest Medicaid autism fraud case in its history.

Prosecution is necessary but it comes after the money is gone. The fraudsters have already been paid. The families who needed care have already been cheated. Taxpayers may only recover pennies on the dollar.

Government should verify before it pays. Does the provider exist? Are real people performing real work? Are the patients eligible? Were the services necessary? Are the invoices honest?

These are not radical demands. It is what hardworking American taxpayers deserve.

When government refuses to verify, it does not merely endanger taxpayer dollars. It destroys public confidence in our elections.

In California, James O’Keefe revealed a cash for ballots election fraud scheme targeting homeless men and women who were offered cash, cigarettes, and marijuana in exchange for signatures on petitions and voter-registration forms. So far one individual exposed in Mr. O’Keefe’s undercover video footage pled guilty to federal charge.

Mr. Shirley followed the money. Mr. O’Keefe followed the signatures.

Both found the same machine: a system that rewards volume, discourages scrutiny, and depends upon someone in authority looking the other way.

In one system, government counts the claims and sends the money without asking who received it or what work was performed. In the other, officials accept registrations without asking who signed them or whether the process was legitimate.

Whether Washington is distributing taxpayer dollars or safeguarding the ballot, government processes first and investigates later. Then, years after the damage is done, it announces an indictment and expects applause.

Fraud is not an ordinary cost of government. It is theft – theft of a taxpayer’s earnings; theft of needed services; theft of a legitimate vote.

Our witnesses went where government investigators had not gone and asked the questions the bureaucracy refused to ask. I thank them for their relentless commitment to exposing fraud and demanding accountability. The American people deserve better from their government including Congress who keeps writing the check.