

December 10, 2015

Opening Statement of Senator James Lankford

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee Hearing:

Implementing Solutions: The Importance of Following Through on GAO and OIG Recommendations

Good morning. I would like to welcome everyone to today's Subcommittee hearing that will focus on the recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office and Inspectors General to improve government efficiency.

We all want a federal government that serves the American people in the most effective and efficient manner. The Government Accountability Office and Agencies' Inspectors General are on the front lines in combating waste, fraud, and mismanagement within government. Their audits and investigations are vital in uncovering and eliminating the billions of waste and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

Through reports, recommendations, and their High Risk List, GAO serves Congress and the public by conducting oversight of how federal dollars are spent. This mission is particularly vital today as we face a federal debt approaching 19 trillion dollars. Last year, GAO saved the taxpayers a record \$74.7 billion dollars, bringing their total to over a half a trillion dollars saved since 2003.

While GAO looks for waste across government, Inspectors General are uniquely positioned to focus on and work within their respective agency and play a critical role in congressional oversight. IG recommendations have the potential to save significant taxpayer dollars but agencies continue to fail in implementing many of these recommendations – to highlight one agency – there are 709 unimplemented recommendations at the Department of Justice alone.

I recently published a report titled "Federal Fumbles" that described 100 examples of wasteful federal spending and burdensome regulations, while also proposing solutions to these problems. I relied extensively on GAO and IG recommendations for this report but acknowledge that this report sheds light on only a small fraction of the waste that GAO and IGs identify every year.

When looking at this issue it is important to remember that this is not an adversarial conversation. Creating a responsible, efficient government is something that we can and should all agree on. It is important that Congress takes an active role to ensure that the GAO, IGs, and the agencies work together to eliminate waste and mismanagement.

Today I look forward to discussing how the federal government can improve its implementation of GAO and IG recommendations and how Congress can better facilitate those efforts.