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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250  
March 19, 2009

## OPEN LETTER TO THE ACQUISITION COMMUNITY

Dear friends,

As you may be aware, I recently became the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight, a subcommittee of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. The Subcommittee has broad oversight authority over all aspects of federal contracting.

This is a tremendous challenge. Over the last eight years, government contracting has more than doubled. In addition to buying everything from plastic pens to fighter planes, the federal government now contracts for services at every agency. Contractors guard federal facilities at home and abroad, analyze classified intelligence, and shape federal policies. Contractors even perform contract management.

Unfortunately, the growth in contracting has outpaced oversight. Problems have occurred at every stage of the contracting process, from pre-award planning and requirements development through the recovery of overcharges. The contracting workforce is no longer adequate to handle the volume and complexity of the contracting workload. And the lack of oversight has been an invitation to waste, fraud, and abuse.

Over the next two years, I plan to encourage a vigorous public debate about the important issues in government contracting. The Subcommittee will conduct investigations and hold regular hearings to examine past failures, current policies, and how to bring more efficiency, transparency, and accountability to the contracting process.

I look forward to working with members of Congress, auditors and inspectors general, government officials, contractors, chambers of commerce, watchdog groups, and all the members of the acquisition community. I will need your support as we move towards a system that better serves the government and the taxpayer.

To begin, I'd like to hear from you. What contract or program needs additional oversight? What laws, regulations, and policies need to be changed? What hearings would you like to see? Please send your ideas to [contracting\\_oversight@mccaskill.senate.gov](mailto:contracting_oversight@mccaskill.senate.gov), or join an open dialogue at <http://moderator.appspot.com/#16/e=21780>.

Thank you for your commitment to improving government contracting. I look forward to working with you on these issues in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight