

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery by Chair Maggie Hassan
Emerging Threats and Spending Oversight Subcommittee Hearing:
Examining the Findings and Recommendations of GAO's 2021 Report on Duplication,
Overlap, Fragmentation and Opportunities to Achieve Financial Benefits
May 12, 2021**

Good afternoon. The Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Spending Oversight convened today's hearing to discuss the Government Accountability Office's 2021 annual report on duplication, overlap, and fragmentation in federal programs, and opportunities to save taxpayer dollars through better program management.

I am grateful to Comptroller General Gene Dodaro and to the GAO analysts assisting him today for their testimony, and for their efforts to not only identify areas of government waste, but also to provide constructive recommendations for eliminating that waste to save substantial taxpayer dollars.

This year, we celebrate GAO's 100th anniversary. Following World War I, Congress saw the need for better control of expenditures, so it established GAO to investigate how federal dollars are spent and to review all federal expenditures. While GAO no longer tracks every penny spent by federal agencies, its core mission – to oversee federal agency performance and financial management – remains unchanged.

In 2010, Congress asked GAO to publish an annual report on federal programs and initiatives that have duplicative goals or activities, and thus, lead to wasteful spending. Eleven years later, the annual duplication report has led to roughly \$429 billion in financial benefits to the federal government.

Progress made by the Executive Branch and Congress to address some of the more than 1,100 actions and recommendations made in these reports has improved agency performance and resource management, as well as saved billions of taxpayer dollars and enhanced service delivery to the American people.

GAO's newest report makes 112 recommendations in 33 new and existing issue areas. Topics covered in this year's report include: the Department of Defense's fragmented system for processing dependency determinations for servicemembers' adult children who experience disabilities; the National Nuclear Security Administration's efforts to encourage cost-savings practices in its contracts, which could save hundreds of millions of dollars; and the duplication and overlap of infectious disease modeling, which, if streamlined at the Department of Health and Human Services, could help the government better plan for and respond to disease outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and save taxpayer dollars in the process.

While many recommendations made over the past 11 years have yet to be addressed, I am committed to ensuring that Congress does its part to eliminate duplication, overlap, and fragmentation to achieve billions in savings. This is why I introduced two bills with Ranking Member Paul last Congress – the Acting on the Annual Duplication Report Acts of 2019 and

2020. These bills directly respond to the recommendations for congressional action detailed in the annual duplication reports.

In addition, I cosponsored Ranking Member Paul's Duplication Scoring Act, which would require GAO to review legislation to determine whether it risks duplicating existing federal programs. As then-Chairman Paul noted when we did our first duplication report hearing together in 2019, "one thing we all agree on is that the kind of inefficiencies caused by duplication need to be corrected." I urge on my colleagues to consider supporting these bipartisan pieces of legislation.

Once again, thank you to Mr. Dodaro and to your team for testifying today. I look forward to today's discussion on how Congress and federal agencies can act on the recommendations made in this year's report to be better stewards of taxpayer dollars.