

ETSO Subcommittee Hearing: Examining the Findings and Recommendations of GAO's 2022 Report on Duplication, Overlap, Fragmentation and Opportunities to Achieve Financial Benefits

June 14, 2022

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Paul

Thank you, Chairwoman Hassan, and thank you to our witness, Comptroller General Dodaro, for joining us.

As we have done in the past, we will discuss the GAO's annual report on duplication, overlap, and fragmentation.

While the efforts to address these issues have resulted in over half a trillion dollars in benefits since 2011, more needs to be done to root out waste and inefficiencies.

GAO's Duplication, Overlap and Fragmentation report provides lawmakers with a roadmap for another half trillion in savings.

If you ask any individual Senator or Congressman, they'll tell you that they oppose waste and duplication.

Yet, that does not stop Members from voting for more and more programs without regard for what came before or what may come next.

I've introduced legislation to correct some of these problems. The Chairwoman and I introduced the Duplication Scoring Act, which would task GAO with scrubbing each committee-reported bill to determine whether it is duplicative or overlaps with existing programs.

I've also introduced the Legislative Performance Review Act, which would revitalize the program authorization process, forcing Congress to review federal program performance more regularly.

But back to the matter at hand – this most recent GAO report sheds light on some truly troubling examples of waste and duplication.

For example, GAO found that the Social Security Administration overpaid Ticket to Work participants by \$768 million between 2002 and 2015. Ticket to Work is a program that partners with employers to provide Social Security disability beneficiaries with federally funded jobs, with the goal of reducing reliance on Social Security disability. Yet, GAO found most participants were still unemployed five years after starting the program.

GAO also found 200 Federal programs across 21 agencies all working to address diet as a factor for chronic health conditions. Seventy-two of the programs are all related to informing the public through mass communication and counseling patients.

As a physician, I acknowledge the importance of a good diet. But two hundred programs spread across 21 agencies? In this case, GAO found that fragmentation hampered the agencies' efforts.

Duplicative programs are not just inefficient, they spend money we do not have.

To address our fiscal crisis, I recently introduced the Six Penny Plan, which would balance the federal budget in 5 years by cutting 6 cents off every dollar spent by the government. As the Six Penny Plan demonstrates, simply by reverting to 2019 spending levels, we can balance the federal budget in just a few years.

Additionally, my Bonuses for Cost Cutters Act would allow Inspectors General to pay their employees \$10,000 for identifying cost-savings.

So, solutions exist that would allow us to be better stewards of taxpayer dollars. Members of Congress just need to find the will to support them.

Thank you, Mr. Dodaro for testifying and for helping Congress find ways to better serve our citizens.