

February 24, 2016

**Opening Statement of Senator Heidi Heitkamp
Ranking Member, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management**

**“The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act: Opportunities for Improvement to
Support State and Local Governments”**

As I have said before, regulations are a critical part of how our federal government keeps our products and food safe, and ensures a level playing field for our businesses. To get good regulations, we need a strong regulatory process.

Part of a strong regulatory process is engaging stakeholders early in the process. Regulators need to talk to industry, labor groups and other stakeholders when developing a rule. Consultation with State, local and tribal governments is also critical to the regulatory process.

Congress should always consider the compliance costs of legislation and how states, local and tribal governments will be impacted. Appropriate consideration must always be given to how decisions made in Washington affect the bottom lines back home. This robust analysis and consultation means we can create a safer and more equitable nation. Out of this need, the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was born, in 1995.

This law has worked to keep us, and the executive agencies accountable to our home states and towns. It helps ensure that those of us, on the Hill, understand how our actions affect budgets beyond our own. It requires agencies to consult with those individuals who have boots on the ground and know how the rules could be followed and what works and what doesn't.

It is important then, as we approach the 21st anniversary of President Clinton signing this bill, that we take a step back and review this important legislation, a retrospective review, if you will. That we check in with our state and local partners and ensure that we are still moving forward.

With that I look forward to hearing from our witnesses and speaking with them about their thoughts on the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.