

July 16, 2015

Opening Statement of Senator James Lankford

**Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs
and Federal Management Hearing titled:**

**“Reviewing the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs’ Role in the
Regulatory Process”**

Good afternoon. This is the fourth in a series of hearings and round tables in which the Subcommittee continues to examine the issues and solutions surrounding today’s regulatory state. Today, we will hear about the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, otherwise known as OIRA, and the essential role it plays in the federal regulatory process.

OIRA was created by Congress in 1980 as an agency situated in the White House’s Office of Management and Budget. At that time, OIRA’s primary role was to review government collections of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act. Since then, however, under various executive orders, OIRA’s role has expanded to include reviewing drafts of significant regulations at their proposed and final stages, as well as significant guidance documents and retrospective review plans. OIRA is also charged with coordinating interagency compliance with laws to better ensure the quality of information used.

With such a broad array of duties, one may assume that OIRA’s office may be as large as those agencies it oversees—after all, the office reviews between 500 and 700 rules annually. But OIRA is a very small shop, with around 47 employees. These employees are highly skilled with advanced degrees in their fields, and are greatly respected by Congress.

Due to its centralized role in overseeing agency rulemaking, OIRA has been called the Executive Branch’s “information aggregator” and the “gatekeeper” to the regulatory process. Indeed, OIRA is uniquely positioned to ask agencies tough questions, ensure that the regulations it reviews are as nimble as possible and meet agency objectives in the least-costly manner, and build consensus within the federal government’s regulatory process.

At the helm of OIRA is its Administrator, Howard Shelanski, who is here with us today. I want to welcome Mr. Shelanski, and I look forward to speaking with him about OIRA's many and varied functions, which prove to be integral to the efficiency and quality of the regulatory process. But first, I will recognize Ranking Member Heitkamp for her opening remarks.