

Opening Statement of Chairman Thomas R. Carper
“Management Matters: Creating a 21st Century Government”
March 12, 2014

As prepared for delivery:

We’re here today because proper management in the federal government matters. It matters for many reasons.

First and foremost, when the American people pay for a government program, they deserve excellence in service in return. Whatever the mission of a public servant – be it protecting or defending our nation, researching cures for diseases, providing support to our nations’ farmers, you name it – that public servant is going to do a better job if backed by a well-run organization.

Management also matters because of the fiscal challenges that our country has faced in recent years. I have said many times that any viable solution to these challenges requires a three-pronged approach.

First, we must both cut spending and address revenues in a balanced approach.

Second, we must rein in the cost of entitlement programs in a way that does not savage the poor or the elderly.

And, finally, through better management of government programs, we must deliver improved services to the American people at a lower cost, or at least at the same cost.

So our hearing today – and the President’s management agenda – falls squarely within that third prong.

In addition to saving money and helping address our budget deficit, smart government management can lead to economic growth. For example, we will hear some encouraging examples today of how opening government data has led to business opportunities in the private sector.

The President has laid out a management agenda in his budget request entitled ‘Creating a 21st Century Government.’ The list is a familiar one to those of us who have been toiling in the trenches of government management for years as my colleagues and I on this committee have. The goals include improved acquisition outcomes, better property management, and reduction of improper payments.

To me, it’s no surprise that there are no surprises on the list. We have known for some time what the challenges are. What we need to do now is to roll up our sleeves and make progress.

Key to making progress on all aspects of the management agenda will be recruiting, training, and retaining the federal workforce of the future. That must include building a first-class senior management team to help ensure that the government sustains a top-notch workforce. I’m

pleased to see that as a pillar of the management agenda, and to hear today from our witnesses about how we can make further progress in this area.

In closing I'll note that there is plenty of room for bipartisan cooperation on these issues. I hope that today's hearing will help energize and provide focus to these efforts, so that by the time the next budget request is rolled out, we can report some good results to the American people about saving money and improving government service.