

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Thomas R. Carper
“Improving the Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Independence of Inspectors General”
February 24, 2015

As prepared for delivery:

Two weeks ago, this Committee held a hearing to examine the Government Accountability Office’s 2015 ‘High-Risk List,’ which I have long considered Congress’ ‘to-do’ list. In some ways, today’s hearing is a continuation, or ‘Part 2’ of that hearing. Like the GAO, the Inspectors General were created to promote the economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of federal departments and agencies.

Every year, Inspectors General identify billions of dollars in potential savings the federal government can achieve through improved management practices. At a time when agencies make an estimated \$125 billion in improper payments each year, the work of Inspectors General can go a long way in reducing our federal budget deficits.

Inspectors General and their staffs promote efficiencies throughout our federal government, help reveal and prosecute wrongdoing, and provide invaluable support to the Congress and the agencies they oversee. Simply put, since Congress created the Inspectors General position in 1978, IG’s have become an essential component of government oversight.

The work of the Inspectors General is critical to this committee, to the agencies they oversee, and to the American public. We rely on them for their investigations, their audits, their recommendations, and their advice. For that reason, it is important that they remain independent and are given access to the information that they need to carry out their responsibilities.

We have a terrific panel of witnesses here before us today, and I am keenly interested in hearing more about the work their offices are conducting and how we can enhance their effectiveness further. One point I would like to raise is the impact of vacant Inspector General positions, and how not having a permanent Inspector General at an agency can hinder oversight.

I also plan on asking Mr. Roth about the impact that the continuing fight over funding the Department of Homeland Security has on his office and on DHS as a whole. As we meet today to discuss the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal government, I would be remiss if I didn’t mention the harmful and wasteful impact funding uncertainty is having on the Department of Homeland Security. Congress needs to do its job and fund the Department so that Mr. Roth and his colleagues can do their work, and the Department as a whole can continue its work to keep all of us safe.

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