Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
"Risky Business: Examining GAO's 2015 List of High Risk Government Programs"
February 11, 2015

As prepared for delivery:

Good morning and welcome.

This morning, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released an update to its list of "High Risk" government operations. GAO has put out a High Risk Report at the beginning of every new Congress since 1990 to inform our oversight and legislative agenda and to focus national attention on the most pressing problems facing the federal government.

The pressure to transform agencies and programs designated as high risk has a real, measurable benefit to the taxpayer. By holding hearings like this one, and through follow up oversight and legislation to address the problems highlighted in this report, we have the potential to save tens of billions of dollars.

Over the last two years, GAO estimates that Congressional and Executive Branch attention to the high risk areas has saved $40 billion.

The 2015 High Risk Report contains an important new high risk area: veterans' health care. It is obvious to all of us that there continue to be serious problems with the government's ability to provide health care to our nation's veterans. Back home in Wisconsin, these problems are becoming increasingly evident with new reports coming in every day. While there are many public servants at the VA who do their best to provide quality care to our nation's heroes, it is clear that a lack of oversight and longstanding bureaucratic mismanagement has led to the systemic problems that have put our veterans at risk.

The work GAO has done to not only bring these issues to the national stage, but to also work year-round behind the scenes with federal agencies to actually start the process of fixing these problems deserves our highest praise.

I look forward to hearing from the head of GAO, Comptroller General Gene Dodaro, about what we in Congress can do to address these longstanding problems through legislation and oversight.