

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

Ranking Member Jamie Raskin Committee on Oversight and Accountability Hearing on “Oversight of the U.S. General Services Administration” November 14, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Comer, and thank you to Administrator Carnahan for working to rearrange your schedule to be with us today for attempt number two at this hearing.

My colleagues and I are committed to a transparent and effective federal government that provides exceptional service to the American people.

GSA provides stewardship of the federal government’s use and provision of real estate, acquisition services, and technology. It provides the services and products that federal agencies need to meet their missions for the American people.

Administrator Carnahan assumed her role during the COVID-19 pandemic, and under her leadership, GSA was instrumental in supporting the government’s response to this crisis. From ensuring the safety of federal buildings to procuring essential supplies and services, GSA was crucial to maintaining government operations.

With the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the Inflation Reduction Act, Democrats have led the way to fund GSA and make the federal government a leader in addressing 21st century challenges, and Administrator Carnahan has delivered transformative action.

GSA has been at the forefront of integrating innovation into government operations, reducing costs, and building a more resilient federal workforce. GSA is preparing the federal government for the future of work with its Workplace 2030 initiative, using federal purchasing power to support small businesses and good middle class jobs, and confronting the climate crisis by reducing federal greenhouse gas emissions, investing in sustainability, and shifting to an electric vehicle fleet.

GSA is also improving access to government services for all Americans, making sure agencies provide better service, engagement, and opportunity to all communities. GSA is drawing lessons learned from the pandemic to better assess the federal government’s real property needs and helping federal agencies reduce their footprint—prudent actions that will save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

While GSA has devoted significant resources to help federal agencies assess their space needs, both immediately and in the future, Congress has diverted billions of dollars away from GSA’s investments in federal buildings, gravely undermining its ability to reduce the federal real estate footprint. The result has been an increase in costs as aging and dilapidated buildings grow more and more expensive to repair. I look forward to hearing more from the Administrator today about the true costs of underfunding GSA and how we can achieve substantial cost savings today by taking advantage of reduced real estate prices, high vacancy rates, and the advent of telework.

While Democrats are working with GSA on improving government service, extreme MAGA Republicans spent weeks embroiled in internal partisan combat and Machiavellian games. This hearing was originally scheduled for October 19, but Chairman Comer cancelled it the night before. Perhaps he was concerned that holding a hearing to criticize the operations of the federal government on Day 16 without a Speaker of the House—a vivid demonstration of Republicans’ inability to handle even their own operations—would not make for a convincing show.

Now we are facing yet another government shutdown in a matter of days. This emerges again from the Republican Majority’s chaos and division. The juvenile antics and ideological extremism of the GOP Conference that left the House of Representatives unable to perform its most basic duties, including giving this agency the funding it needs to do its work. If my colleagues across the aisle are truly concerned about the importance of ensuring effective government for our people, they could start by getting their act together.

With that, I look forward to hearing testimony this morning from Administrator Carnahan on GSA’s important work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

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Contact: Nelly Decker, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181