Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Robin Kelly

Joint Hearing on "The Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA) Scorecard 5.0: Measuring Agencies' Implementation"
Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Subcommittee on Information Technology

November 15, 2017

Before we begin today's hearing, I want to thank you, Chairman Hurd, Chairman Meadows, and Ranking Member Connolly for your steadfast leadership as our Subcommittees continue working together to oversee the improvement of federal IT systems. I'm glad to have such great partners in this endeavor.

Improving the efficiency and security of the federal government's IT systems is essential to our nation's security. Crucial to that effort is the ongoing oversight conducted by our Subcommittees to hold agencies accountable for implementing key aspects of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA). An important part of that oversight has been the scorecard our Subcommittees developed for grading agency progress in meeting the FITARA requirements.

Today, our Subcommittees released the fifth version of the scorecard. It's been two years since we released the first one and held our first hearing on the issue. Since that time, we've strengthened the role of the CIO at many agencies, increased transparency in project management, and we've saved billions of taxpayer dollars. I'm proud of the work that we've accomplished together so far.

The new Scorecard, however, shows that progress is difficult and that we still have a long way to go. For example, while some agencies like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have done well, going from a "D" in 2015 to an "A-" today, others like the Small Business Administration (SBA) have fallen behind, going from a "D" in 2015 to a "C-" today.

Overall, the grades for only three agencies went up on this Scorecard, fifteen stayed the same, and six actually went down.

The Scorecard makes clear that agencies still have a long way to go to address the challenge of reducing the growing number of federal data centers. The FITARA Enhancement Act that was introduced by Ranking Member Connolly earlier this year would extend the timeline for agencies to close any unneeded data centers. The bill will also provide greater support to agency CIOs in their efforts to eliminate and consolidate large numbers of data centers.

Since the release of the last scorecard, the Subcommittees have added software licensing as a metric of performance to this one. The overall grades in this category indicate that agencies are struggling when it comes to the management of their software licenses.

I am concerned about this most recent Scorecard performance, and look forward to hearing from today's agencies on the struggles and challenges they are facing in FITARA implementation, and how Congress can be more helpful.

There is simply too much at stake when it comes to FITARA. This isn't just about saving taxpayer money. It's about improving the overall digital hygiene of the federal government and the scored metrics here are the basics of running any shop.

I want to thank the witnesses for testifying today. Mr. Powner, you might just be the most popular witness on the Hill. This is your fifth hearing with us on FITARA. I'm also looking forward to hearing from all the agencies here today.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

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