

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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

<http://oversight.house.gov>

**November 4, 2015**

**Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)**

### **Oversight Subcommittees on Information Technology and Government Operations:**

#### ***“The Federal Information Technology Acquisition and Reform Act’s Role in Reducing IT Acquisition Risk, Part II – Measuring Agencies’ FITARA Implementation”***

Chairman Hurd, Chairman Meadows, and Ranking Member Kelly, I appreciate this latest joint subcommittee hearing to examine implementation of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition and Reform Act, which is better known as FITARA or Issa-Connolly. Our bipartisan legislation represents the first major reform of the laws governing federal IT management since the seminal Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996.

Although that previous effort established a solid foundation, it fell short of achieving its full potential in large part due to poor implementation, which was exacerbated by a lack of robust congressional oversight as the principal authors left Congress shortly after its adoption. I am determined to ensure that will not be the case this time around, and I hope this will be just the second in a series of hearings our subcommittees hold to gauge agency progress in realizing the transformative nature of these reforms.

I am encouraged by how quickly the Administration and federal agencies have embraced this effort. I appreciate the leadership of federal CIO and the Office of Management and Budget, which issued superb implementation guidance earlier this summer. Similarly, GAO has designated improving the management of IT acquisitions and operations as a new government-wide high-risk area with the expressed intent of encouraging swifter agency adoption of the FITARA framework.

In addition, I am pleased by the results of a recent survey of federal IT professionals conducted by MeriTalk, a public-private partnership focused on improving government use of IT, that shows nearly 80% believe FITARA will have a positive effect on the value of their agency’s IT. They specifically cite its potential to reduce duplicative IT systems, improve investment decisions, increase communication and transparency, and produce real savings.

As part of this committee’s effort to provide effective oversight, we have devised a scorecard to measure each agency’s progress in implementing the various components of FITARA. Today, we will release an initial scorecard focusing on four of those reform activities: Data Center Consolidation, IT Portfolio Review Savings, Incremental Project

Development/Delivery, Risk and Assessment Transparency. These metrics were selected because their implementation will have a demonstrable benefit on IT acquisitions and operations, and this data is updated and available on a quarterly basis. Further, GAO already was gathering information from the agencies themselves to verify reporting in some of these areas, so the committee tasked GAO with collecting the agencies' self-reported information and then scoring it based on our direction.

I want to caution my colleagues, our partners in the administration, and others in the federal IT community that this scorecard is not intended to be a juridical exercise. It should **not** be considered a "scarlet letter" on the backs of federal agencies. This initial assessment is a point-in-time snapshot. Much like the quarterly report cards issued in our schools, we fully expect agency scores to improve over time as they fully implement these reforms.

The intent is to urge agencies to seize this moment and use this scorecard as a management tool to better guide decision making and investments. While the grades themselves are illustrative of overall performance, it is the multiple elements that make up the grades on which agencies and our committee will focus to ensure we deliver on the transformative promise of FITARA.

For example, while the Department of Transportation may be at the lower end of the scores on certain areas right now, I am encouraged by reading CIO McKinney's prepared statement, in which he says "IT is no longer just the business of the CIO. Rather, IT is everybody's business." That is exactly the point, and getting agency buy-in on the value of correctly implementing FITARA is paramount. I commend the DOT on its efforts to implement a more holistic approach to planning its IT investments by including budget and acquisition staff in its decision making process to ensure everyone understands how these decisions must support overall IT goals. GSA has a similar arrangement with its Investment Review Board, and Treasury employs a best-practice model of IT Information Resource Management.

I look forward to hearing more about the experiences and observations of these three agencies. I also would like to hear more from CIO Scott on the "common baseline" agencies are working to achieve by the end of the year. I understand two agencies already have achieved that milestone. And finally, I welcome a frank assessment from the GAO on the additional steps agencies ought to be pursuing to maximize efficiencies to realize savings, particularly with respect to holding feet to the fire to advance data center consolidation and maintain robust PortfolioStat and TechStat reviews.

For example, on data centers, GAO says we are still not fully realizing the goal for closing data centers, in part because agencies are not moving aggressively enough to capture savings and also because we continue to discover more data centers. When the Federal Data Center Consolidation Initiative began in 2010, former CIO Vivek Kundra reported the federal government maintained roughly 1,600 data centers, and he established the goal of closing half of them. At the time I pushed to cut that number in half again to 400. Three years later, the GAO discovered the actual number was north of 6,000 after we applied a broader definition of what constitutes a data center. In May 2014, GAO reported the number had grown again to more than 9,500, and, in preparation for this hearing, we learned that another 2,000 had recently been

discovered. This redundant infrastructure is costly and inefficient, and agencies really must focus on reducing this footprint to capture what should be considered low-hanging fruit.

I want to commend our partners for their hard work to advance these important IT initiatives. The kind of cultural reforms we are talking about will require continuous monitoring and maintenance to be successful. This committee will be a partner in prioritizing effective FITARA implementation and ensuring Congress does everything it can to support those efforts.

---

Contact: Jennifer Werner, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181.