

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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### Ranking Member Kweisi Mfume

#### Subcommittee on Government Operations and the Federal Workforce

#### Hearing on “What We Have Here ... Is A Failure to Collaborate: Review of GAO’s Annual Duplication Report”

#### June 13, 2024

Today’s hearing focuses on the Government Accountability Office’s (GAO) 14th annual report on duplicative programs and opportunities for cost savings, allowing us to zero in on areas where we can work together to cut waste, encourage greater collaboration, and serve as better stewards for American taxpayer dollars.

**Promoting greater efficiency and effectiveness of our federal programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives government-wide is what this Subcommittee is all about.**

Since the Report’s genesis in 2011, Congress and agencies have fully or partially addressed 73% of matters and recommendations, identifying a total of \$667 billion in financial benefits.

Congress and federal agencies have achieved these financial benefits through implementing GAO’s recommendations to eradicate duplication and fragmentation of our federal programs.

Increased oversight of the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) saved \$13.2 billion alone.

As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic forced 45% of small businesses across the country to close their doors.

The PPP authorized the SBA to distribute a record \$659 billion to help small businesses across the country to continue to pay their employees.

**However, unscrupulous actors took advantage of this crisis and defrauded this program. The Chairman, myself, and members of this Committee fought back against these instances of fraud. My own efforts included two bills, H.R. 5427 and H.R. 4666, that I co-led and passed through the house just last year.**

At the agency-level, the SBA implemented an oversight plan, including an automated screening system to identify potentially ineligible or fraudulent applicants and recipients, leading to billions of dollars in cost savings for the taxpayer.

This year's Report identified 112 new matters and recommendations in 42 new topic areas for Congress or federal agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government.

These recommendations span across departments and branches of government, calling on both Congress and agencies to rise to the occasion, and take additional action towards ensuring our government works better for the people it serves.

As we consider methods to reduce government spending, I think it is important to point out that the House is voting to fund the Department of Defense (DOD) with two different vehicles, two weeks in a row.

**I mentioned that because over the past 14 years, GAO has identified \$197 billion in ways to cut costs at the DOD. Notably, DOD has the highest number of open duplication and cost savings recommendations of all agencies.**

The DOD unfortunately has a history of critical challenges with its financial management systems, business processes, internal controls, and financial reporting.

To that extent, GAO noted that the DOD in particular should, "improve oversight of its business and financial management systems, allowing for more informed investment decisions, which could result in cost savings and a clean audit opinion."

**I understand the importance of funding our military to protect democracy at home and abroad. However, we must work to eliminate, not exacerbate, duplicative efforts to ensure our nation, and our troops, get the greatest value of every dollar spent.**

**Mr. Dodaro, this report is a critical service to Congress and the American people, and I view GAO as an important ally in this Subcommittee's work to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Federal Government.**

I'm looking forward to hearing more about how this Subcommittee can collaborate on methods to address outstanding issues, and discuss solutions that will ensure our tax dollars are spent wisely.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

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