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House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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Ranking Member Shontel Brown

Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Information Technology, and Government Innovation

“Unlocking Government Efficiency Through IT Modernization”

April 29, 2025

Thank you, Chairwoman Mace, for holding this important hearing.

The federal government has long been behind the curve in modernizing its IT systems. We can all agree on the urgent need to bring these systems into the 21st century—to strengthen our cybersecurity infrastructure, enhance customer service for the American people, and keep pace with the rapidly evolving cyber landscape.

Since 2015, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has repeatedly warned about the federal government’s overreliance on aging, vulnerable legacy IT systems, emphasizing that “improving the management of IT acquisitions and operations” must be a top priority.

Today, nearly 80 percent of the billions of dollars the federal government spends annually on IT is dedicated to operating and maintaining outdated systems—many of which are increasingly susceptible to cybersecurity threats.

For the past two decades, Congress and administrations of both parties have worked together to modernize federal IT infrastructure. Earlier this year, Chairwoman Mace and I partnered to pass the Federal Contractor Cybersecurity Vulnerability Reduction Act of 2025, strengthening cybersecurity standards for federal contractors by establishing vulnerability disclosure programs. This is a model of the bipartisan work we must continue.

In 2014, Congress passed the Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act (FITARA), empowering Congress to better monitor agency efforts in managing IT acquisitions. Thanks to FITARA’s implementation, GAO reports that, as of September 2024, the federal government has achieved \$31.4 billion in cost savings. This progress reflects the impact of sustained bipartisan oversight and the creation of innovative funding mechanisms to help agencies replace aging infrastructure.

While there is much to celebrate, Congress must remain vigilant. IT modernization is not merely about upgrading systems—it is about ensuring they are secure, resilient, and responsibly managed.

Recent reports have raised concerns about the Department of Government Efficiency’s (DOGE) efforts that may undermine the integrity of federal IT modernization, particularly regarding the protection of sensitive data and the layoffs of critical IT and cybersecurity experts.

My Democratic colleagues and I have sent multiple letters to the Administration requesting more information about how sensitive civilian data is being safeguarded during this transition.

This work requires expertise. I am concerned that funding cuts and layoffs at agencies like CISA, NIST, and DHS—the very institutions tasked with securing our government’s operating systems—are stunting the hard-earned progress we’ve made.

Cyber threats are real, constant, and evolving. We must remain ready, resilient, and nimble in the face of potential breaches by adversaries.

IT modernization is a bipartisan issue. I look forward to continuing our work together on this Committee—cutting through the noise created by reckless cuts at DOGE—and focusing on the real task at hand. I am confident we can find common ground and continue to strengthen our digital infrastructure to better serve and protect the American people.

Thank you, and I yield back.

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