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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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February 15, 2011

The Honorable Darrell E. Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On Thursday, the Committee will hold a hearing to review a report issued every two years at the start of each Congress by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) that sets forth its list of "High Risk" programs and spending that are most vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse. I am writing to request that the Committee invite to the hearing Senator Claire McCaskill, the Chair of the Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. My staff have contacted her office, and she is willing and available to appear.

As you know, GAO has provided the Committee with an embargoed copy of its 2011 High Risk report, and problems with government contracting play a prominent role. GAO's report cites as one of the major High Risk categories "Managing Federal Contracts More Effectively" and includes separate High Risk entries for the following areas:

- Management of Interagency Contracting
- DOD Contract Management
- DOD Supply Chain Management
- DOD Weapon Systems Acquisition
- DOE Contract Management (National Nuclear Security Administration and Office of Environmental Management)
- NASA Acquisition Management

In addition, GAO's 2011 report lists "Implementing and Transforming the Department of Homeland Security" (DHS) as a High Risk area, in part because of significant ongoing contracting issues and concerns. As you may recall, our Committee has done significant work on this issue. A bipartisan report prepared for Chairman Tom Davis and Ranking Member Henry Waxman adopted by the Committee in July 2006 identified "32 DHS contracts, collectively worth \$34.3 billion, that have experienced significant overcharges, wasteful

spending, or mismanagement.”¹ The report also concluded that within DHS, “contract spending is growing rapidly,” “noncompetitive contracts have soared,” “contract mismanagement is widespread,” and “the costs to the taxpayer are enormous.”²

As Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight, Senator McCaskill has been at the forefront of examining these government contracting issues and would offer valuable insight to complement our Committee’s previous work. Her testimony also could assist the Committee in reviewing GAO’s latest report and the challenges that widespread contracting issues pose to the effective and efficient operations of the federal government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elijah F. Cummings". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Elijah F. Cummings
Ranking Democratic Member

¹ *Waste, Abuse, and Mismanagement in Department of Homeland Security Contracts*, House Committee on Government Reform (July 2006) (online at www.govexec.com/pdfs/DHScontractingreportJuly2006.pdf).

² *Id.*