

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management Subcommittee

Ranking Member Margaret Wood Hassan
Opening Statement

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your work and your staff's work on this hearing. And I also want to thank the witnesses for being here today to provide their expertise on these issues.

Today's hearing focuses on the issue of government spending on programs that have expired and that Congress has failed to reauthorize, but continue to operate through mandates in appropriations bills.

Earlier this year, the Congressional Budget Office reported that in fiscal year 2019, 971 programs continued to operate despite an expired authorization of appropriations. These programs cost \$307 billion, and accounted for roughly 25 percent of all discretionary funding in fiscal year 2019.

There are critically important programs among those identified by the Congressional Budget Office. These are large programs like medical services and hospital care for veterans and those established under the Violence Against Women Act, as well as smaller programs dedicated to civil rights, environmental protection, and the promotion of science and the arts. These programs are vital to the health and safety of our constituents – and that is all the more reason they should be subject to congressional oversight through the reauthorization process, so that we can be assured that they are working as Congress intended and so that we can identify opportunities for improvement.

I am proud to have introduced and supported a number of bipartisan bills to help Congress fulfill its oversight duties in an efficient, data-driven way, including the Foundations of Evidence-Based Policy Making Act, Taxpayers Right to Know Act, and the Duplication Scoring Act of 2019, which Chairman Paul and I introduced earlier this year.

While I believe that authorizing committees should periodically review programs, I disagree with the premise that programs should automatically lapse or wind down if that does not happen, even when Congress agrees to fund them. It would do enormous harm to our constituents if programs to provide medical services to veterans or to combat violence against women ended because Congress appropriated funding, but failed reauthorize the programs.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and most importantly, I hope our witnesses can help us to identify ways to continue to improve congressional processes in order to safeguard taxpayers' dollars, while ensuring that Congress continues to support essential programs that serve the American people. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing, and to the witnesses for your attendance.