

Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
High Risk List 2019: Recommendations to Reduce Risk of Waste, Fraud, and
Mismanagement in Federal Programs
Wednesday, March 6, 2019

As prepared for delivery:

At the beginning of each new Congress, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issues a report highlighting federal government agencies and programs that present the greatest economic and national security risks. The goal of the High Risk report closely mirrors the mission statement of our committee: to enhance the economic and national security of America and promote more efficient, effective, and accountable government. GAO's report helps Congress focus on the highest priority items.

Federal agencies have saved nearly \$350 billion since 2006 by addressing high-risk areas on the GAO's list, with \$47 billion realized just last year. By addressing risks, we not only save taxpayer dollars, but create programs that run more efficiently and better serve the needs of the American people.

This year, GAO identified 35 government programs and agencies that are the most vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement, or need complete transformation. This includes the addition of two new areas to the list, security clearance processing and Department of Veteran Affairs Acquisition Management. Several of the areas on the list have also been the focus of this committee's work over the last few years, including protecting federal networks, reducing improper payments, managing federal real property, hiring a skilled federal cyber workforce, creating a financially viable U.S. Postal Service, and reducing waste in the 2020 decennial census. The committee will continue to use this report as a guide as we work to find bipartisan solutions to these problems.

I am pleased to see that many agencies and programs have made progress in addressing risks. I am particularly encouraged that all the high risk areas at least partially met the "leadership commitment" criteria, with half fully meeting the criteria. I believe this indicates that the administration is taking these risks seriously, but we know more work must be done.

Testifying before the committee today is GAO Comptroller General Gene Dodaro. Comptroller General Dodaro has led the GAO since December 2010 and has been working at GAO for over 40 years. I want to thank the Comptroller General and all the hardworking men and women at GAO whom he represents. Your work is invaluable to the American people and I look forward to your testimony.