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SUBCOMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION POLICY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND THE CENSUS

Congressman Adam Putnam, Chairman



OVERSIGHT HEARING STATEMENT BY ADAM PUTNAM, CHAIRMAN

Hearing topic: "Electronic Government: A Progress Report on the Successes and Challenges of Government-wide Information Technology Solutions."

Wednesday, March 24, 2004

2:30 p.m.

Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building

OPENING STATEMENT

Good afternoon and welcome to the Subcommittee's hearing on "Electronic Government: A Progress Report on the Successes and Challenges of Government-wide Information Technology Solutions."

During the 1st session of the 108th Congress, this Subcommittee focused a great deal of attention on the oversight of the federal government's E-Government element of the President's Management Agenda (PMA). With a commitment to an aggressive and sustained effort, the launch of the President's Management Agenda in August 2001 established a strategy for transforming the federal government in a manner that produces measurable results that matter in the lives of the American people. One of the five components of the PMA is Electronic Government, intended to utilize the power and

creativity of information technology (IT) to produce a more citizen-centric government, as well as one that is more efficient, productive, and cost-effective on behalf of the American taxpayer. E-Government provides a platform to establish cross-agency collaboration and a rapid departure *from* a stovepipe approach to government operations *to* an approach that facilitates coordination, collaboration, communication, and cooperation.

The E-Government Act of 2002, designed and advanced by Chairman Tom Davis, set forth a series of 24 initial e-government projects and established the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as the Lead Agency responsible for implementation and oversight of those initiatives. Today, the Subcommittee will continue to exercise its oversight responsibility by examining the progress made on the initial 24 “Quicksilver” projects, including the impediments to progress and any lessons learned during the development and implementation of these important initiatives. Additionally, we will take a look at the next steps i.e. the current plans for the next series of “Lines of Business” initiatives that will potentially produce further significant savings for the American taxpayer. I believe today’s hearing will be an opportunity to celebrate success and much progress despite unexpected “bumps in the road” on some projects and a number of continuing obstacles. As we have learned in previous hearings, many of the impediments are cultural and people-based, rather than being attributable to the technology itself (or even available resources).

I am optimistic about the potential savings that can be achieved by the full implementation of the initial set of projects, and am eager to hear more today about the anticipated savings that will be derived by the next set of initiatives. In fact, I am so optimistic, that this Subcommittee has accepted a challenge of identifying significant budget savings for fiscal year 2005 through the portfolio of subject areas that reside within our jurisdiction, including most definitely E-Government.

Federal government expenditures on information technology products and services will approach \$60 billion dollars in FY05, making the federal government the largest IT purchaser in the world. Thanks in large part to the outstanding efforts by OMB and the General Accounting Office particularly, great strides have been made to improve productivity and results from IT investments. However, for too long, and even continuing in some places today, individual agencies have pursued their own IT agendas that focus solely on mission rather than emanating from a commitment to customer service or sound business processes.

As a first step to a meaningful coordination of IT expenditures government-wide, Congress passed the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996, which included the Information Technology Management Reform Act and the Federal Acquisition Reform Act. This legislation sets forth requirements for federal government IT investment management decision-making and corresponding responsibility and accountability. It requires agencies to fundamentally link IT investments to agency strategic planning, including the linkage to a federal enterprise architecture. Clinger-Cohen also requires that OMB submit a report annually to Congress on the results of federal IT spending and net program performance benefits achieved. This information was included as part of the FY05 budget submission sent to Congress in early February.

The E-Government Act of 2002 (P. L. 107-347) took the next step to improve IT investment results requiring enhanced and more user-friendly access to government information and the delivery of information and services to citizens, business partners, employees, and other agencies and entities. The E-Government Act also requires OMB to provide a report to Congress annually on the status of e-government. Rather than simply identify and report on IT investments, the Act forces a cultural change from consolidating and integrating IT investments to encouraging performance-based, citizen-centric, cross-agency planning.

Today, I look forward to our distinguished witnesses providing the Subcommittee with insight on a number of specific issues:

- A description of the progress on the initial 24 “Quicksilver” projects: what are the lessons learned and are we still facing hurdles with some of the more challenging initiatives such as Recruitment One-Stop, E-Travel, E-Grants, E-Rulemaking, E-Payroll, and E-Authentication?
- What are the estimated cost-savings that will be derived in FY05 as a result of these initiatives?
- What are the next steps in the subsequent five “Lines of Business” initiatives?
- How does the E-Government strategy integrate with the development and implementation of a Federal Enterprise Architecture? How is OMB utilizing the Business Reference Model (BRM) to identify redundant IT investments?
- How does the E-Government strategy influence the agency investment decision-making as it relates to information security? How does the progress or lack of progress in compliance with the requirements of FISMA affect an agency’s E-Government Scorecard result for the President’s Management Agenda?
- How has the appropriated funding from Congress affected the progress of the various e-government initiatives?
- How will tools such as SmartBuy provide OMB with even greater opportunities to achieve the goals and objectives of the federal e-government initiative?

I eagerly look forward to the expert testimony our distinguished panel of leaders in various federal agencies will provide today as well as the opportunity to demonstrate the outstanding progress that has been made thus far with these initiatives, while acknowledging the magnitude of the challenge that continues to lie ahead.

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