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Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations and the Census

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OVERSIGHT HEARING STATEMENT BY ADAM PUTNAM, CHAIRMAN

**Hearing topic: "Where's the CIO? The Role, Responsibility and Challenge for
Federal Chief Information Officers in IT Investment Oversight
and Information Management"**

Wednesday, July 21, 2004

2:30 p.m.

Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building

OPENING STATEMENT

Good afternoon and welcome to the Subcommittee's hearing on "The Role, Responsibility, and Challenge for Federal Chief Information Officers in IT Investment Oversight and Information Management."

In 1996, Congress passed the landmark Clinger-Cohen Act, bringing fundamental changes to the way the federal government manages information technology. One of the most important parts of the Act was the establishment of the Chief Information Officer as the position that leads agency efforts to manage information technology.

Now, 8 years after the passage of Clinger-Cohen, we must ask: Where is the CIO? Who do they report to? What authority do they have? Why is the turnover for the CIO position so high?

As many know, this Subcommittee releases a report card on each agency's implementation of the Federal Information Security Management Act. On the last report card, the average grade was a "D." Additionally, the scores for implementing e-government under the President's Management Agenda, although improving, are not encouraging.

The Subcommittee has held several hearings throughout this Congress examining the CIO's responsibilities, including managing IT investment, developing agency-wide enterprise architectures, and implementing sound information security practices. Throughout these hearings, I have learned that CIOs in the federal government are facing significant uphill battles in meeting their responsibilities.

To better understand these problems, I asked the Government Accountability Office to examine the role of the CIO in federal agencies. As we will hear today, some of the findings – and the questions they raise – are intriguing. For example:

The average tenure for a federal CIO is only 23 months, yet experts say that a CIO needs 3 – 5 years on the job to be effective.

CIOs often do not have control over all IT investment in an agency. Major bureaus may buy IT systems without going through the CIO, making capital planning and effective IT management all the more difficult.

CIOs juggle many responsibilities and often times face internal push back as they try to institute reforms at their agencies.

Federal CIOs have 13 major areas of responsibility – from IT investment management to e-government to privacy. And with time and new laws, the role of the CIO is expanding.

Finally, Clinger-Cohen requires that CIOs at the largest departments and agencies report directly to the agency head but this is not always the case.

In an increasingly networked world, the government has become more dependent on information technology to deliver its services. Federal agencies cannot operate efficiently and effectively without solid leadership from a CIO that is supported by the very top officials in the agency.

I look forward to hearing from our panels of experts on this topic, including the Administration's leadership on information technology, as well as former and current CIOs, to see what this committee and this Congress can do to improve this situation.

I welcome all of the witnesses.

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