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STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN ADAM PUTNAM (R-FL)

Federal E-Government Initiatives: Are We Headed in the Right Direction?

March 13, 2003

Good afternoon and welcome to the first hearing of the newly reorganized Subcommittee. I am honored to have been selected by Chairman Tom Davis to serve as chairman. As you know, last Congress he sat in this seat and did a tremendous job of beginning the process of bringing the federal government into the 21st Century, and I look forward to working with him on this issue in the weeks and months to come.

I would also like to welcome my good friend and Ranking Member, Mr. Lacy Clay from Missouri. I look forward to working with you, Mr. Clay, as well as all the Members and staff during this Congress to provide bipartisan oversight on these critical areas of our Federal government.

Before I talk specifically about today's hearing on the current status of the federal government's E-government initiative, I would like to speak briefly about my vision for the Subcommittee's work during the 108th Congress. I've outlined an aggressive agenda, and I'm anxious to get the ball rolling.

- I expect to examine closely intergovernmental relations in the areas of emergency response and disaster management, as well as federal grant disbursement;
- In the area of Census, the Subcommittee will continue to examine the American Community Survey, and ensure that the Census is an accurate count based on real numbers;
- The Subcommittee will examine data sharing and privacy issues with an eye towards the sharing of information within and between governments, looking in particular at programs such as the Total Information Awareness program at the Department of Defense;

- We will examine the President's recently-submitted cyber security proposal, and the security of our infrastructure for financial markets, public utilities and other critical systems;
- In IT management and e-government, the Subcommittee will examine agency and department website development, cross agency coordination, acquisition strategy and performance results.

I hope that the items just mentioned give a flavor for the direction this Subcommittee will take in the coming months. We have an aggressive agenda, and I intend to provide vigorous oversight of the areas under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction.

Today's hearing focuses on the subject of E-government, which is, simply put, the ability of the Federal government to use technology, particularly Web-based Internet applications, to enhance access to government information and delivery of information and services to citizens, business partners, employees, and other agencies. At the same time, E-government initiatives seek to make the Federal government itself more efficient, productive and cost-effective.

I would like to thank today's witnesses for adjusting their schedules to accommodate the rescheduling from the original hearing date.

Today, we have an expert panel on E-government that will provide us with their professional insight: I'd like to welcome:

- Mark Forman, Associate Director, Information Technology and Electronic Government, Office of Management and Budget;
- Joel Willemsen, Managing Director, Information Technology, U.S. General Accounting Office;
- Patricia McGinnis, President and CEO of The Council for Excellence in Government; and
- Leonard Pomata, President, webMethods Government.

The expansion of E-government was one of five key elements of the President's Management Agenda. The goal is to **quote** "champion citizen centered electronic government that will result in a major improvement in the federal government's value to the citizen." **End Quote**

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) developed a task force known as the Quicksilver process and began to gather information and strategize on E-government initiatives in August of 2001. In all, the task force identified over 350 potential E-government projects. These projects were then placed into 40 "portfolios" of related ideas, eliminating duplicates along the way.

Eventually, with the final approval of the President's Management Council, 24 initiatives were selected. OMB's criteria for choosing initiatives included: potential value to customers, potential improvement in agency efficiency and likelihood of deployment in 18 to 24 months.

Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis is to be commended for the E-Government Act of 2002, which sought to improve IT investment and required OMB to provide an annual report to Congress on the status of E-government. Rather than simply identify and report IT investment at each agency, the E-Government Act forces a cultural change in IT procurement, from consolidating and integrating IT investments to encouraging performance-based, citizen-centered, cross-agency planning.

Under the Act, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has been designated as the lead organization for all federal government IT purchasing and planning, and all federal agencies must comply with OMB guidance to ensure implementation of E-Government.

Federal government expenditures on IT will near \$60 billion in FY04, making the Federal government the largest purchaser of IT in the world. However, simply because the Federal government spends the most doesn't mean that it spends that money wisely, gets the most for its investment or provides technologically advanced and easy to use services to the public.

One of our important missions on this Subcommittee is to ensure -- to the greatest extent possible -- a technologically-advanced government providing fast, efficient and needed services to the American public.

I would like to thank each witness for taking the time to participate in this important hearing. Thanks for your valuable contribution.

Today's hearing can be viewed live via WebCast by going to **<http://reform.house.gov>** and then clicking on the link under "Live Committee Broadcast".

Today, I am also pleased to announce that this Subcommittee will be the first Subcommittee in the House of Representatives to use Video to Text technology. In a few days, the public will be able to go to the Committee's Home page and find a specific piece of video for this hearing by doing a word, phrase or name search. They will then be given a list of choices to choose from and can view a video clip of approximately 45 seconds in length containing the information they searched for.

This is a tremendous advance in the archiving and retrieval of historical records in the House of Representatives. The Library of Congress, in conjunction with FedNet, has been taking the lead in bringing this technology to the House and Chairman Davis is to be commended for bringing emerging technologies to this Committee.