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June 12, 2020

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

I wish to join as a co-requester on the study titled, "Agencies' Telework Readiness and Use of Telework for Employees in Response to Coronavirus Pandemic," as part of the Government Accountability Office's work to fulfill its mandate under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 (Pub. L. No. 116-136).

Under normal circumstances, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) plays a significant role in Congress' ability to conduct oversight and improve governance. Now, during the coronavirus pandemic, GAO's role is especially vital to ensure that agencies fulfill their missions while protecting the health and safety of their employees, including making telework readily available. Thus, as GAO designs this study, I request your consideration of the following questions:

1. What factors affected the extent to which agencies adopted telework prior to the coronavirus pandemic? For example, to what extent were there logistical barriers (i.e. pertaining to the availability of physical devices and cybersecurity infrastructure) or cultural biases that limited agencies' use of telework? Which of these factors played the most significant role?
2. To what extent have agencies' experience during the pandemic reduced or eliminated barriers to teleworking? Which barriers remain and what resources do agencies believe are needed to address these barriers (e.g. training, funding, etc.)?
3. To what extent were telework eligible employees not permitted to telework during the pandemic despite guidance to maximize telework?¹
4. To what extent did agencies realize energy cost savings as a result of the increase in telework during the pandemic?

¹There have been troubling reports of telework eligible employees not being permitted to telework despite guidance to maximize telework. See, for example, Jason Miller, *Teleworking among feds ramped up but plenty of issues remain*, Federal News Network (Mar. 25, 2020), <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2020/03/teleworking-among-feds-ramped-up-but-plenty-of-issues-remain/>.

I appreciate your attention to this request. I acknowledge the limited time and resources that GAO has to dedicate to this important study under these circumstances, which may limit the scope of the report.

Please keep Christina Willis (Christina_C.C._Willis@hsgac.senate.gov) and Allison Tinsey (Allison_Tinsey@hsgac.senate.gov) of my staff apprised of the work as it proceeds.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
Ranking Member
Federal Spending Oversight and
Emergency Management Subcommittee