

Statement by

William M. Christian

Director of Government Affairs, Citizens Against Government Waste

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Deborah Collier

Director of Technology Policy, Citizens Against Government Waste

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION, OUR NAMES ARE WILLIAM M. CHRISTIAN, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS FOR CITIZENS AGAINST GOVERNMENT WASTE (CAGW), AND DEBORAH COLLIER, DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY AT CAGW. OUR COLLEAGUE, SEAN KENNEDY, CAGW'S DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, COULD NOT BE WITH US TODAY, BUT HIS VIEWS ARE ALSO PROVIDED IN TODAY'S STATEMENT.

CAGW IS A PRIVATE, NONPROFIT, NONPARTISAN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO EDUCATING THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ABOUT WASTE, MISMANAGEMENT, AND INEFFICIENCY IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. CELEBRATING OUR 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, CAGW WAS FOUNDED IN 1984 BY THE LATE INDUSTRIALIST J. PETER GRACE AND NATIONALLY-SYNDICATED COLUMNIST JACK ANDERSON TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN'S GRACE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS AND OTHER WASTE-CUTTING PROPOSALS. SINCE ITS INCEPTION, CAGW HAS BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE FIGHT FOR EFFICIENCY, ECONOMY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT.

WE HAVE MORE THAN ONE MILLION MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS NATIONWIDE, AND, OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS, HAVE HELPED SAVE TAXPAYERS \$1.3 TRILLION THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GRACE COMMISSION FINDINGS AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS. CAGW DOES NOT ACCEPT GOVERNMENT FUNDS. OUR MISSION REFLECTS THE INTERESTS OF TAXPAYERS.

IT IS NO SECRET THAT WASTEFUL SPENDING IS PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THAT EVERY AGENCY COULD PERFORM ITS FUNCTIONS MORE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY. THE FIRST MODERN COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT TO REFORM GOVERNMENT AND/OR ELIMINATE WASTEFUL SPENDING OCCURRED THROUGH THE COMMISSION ON REORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS IN 1947 UNDER PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN AND BECAME KNOWN AS THE HOOVER COMMISSION, AS IT WAS LED BY FORMER PRESIDENT HERBERT HOOVER. THE COMMISSION MET FROM 1947-1949 AND AGAIN FROM 1953-1955.

MORE THAN 70 PERCENT OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE IMPLEMENTED BY EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATION ACTION, INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE, AS WELL AS THE GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.

THE NEXT COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OCCURRED UNDER PRESIDENT REAGAN, WHO CREATED THE PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE SECTOR SURVEY ON COST CONTROL IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN 1982, WHICH BECAME BETTER KNOWN AS THE GRACE COMMISSION. THE COMMISSION ISSUED ITS FINAL REPORT IN 1984 AND MADE 2,478 RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WOULD HAVE SAVED \$424.4 BILLION IN THE FIRST THREE YEARS AFTER FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS. THROUGH EXECUTIVE ORDERS, PRESIDENT REAGAN HELPED SAVED \$100 BILLION. THE ADMINISTRATION'S ANNUAL REPORTS ON MANAGEMENT OF THE

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TRACKED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GRACE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROVIDED A LIST OF INITIATIVES THAT WERE INCLUDED IN THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ELIMINATE WASTE, FRAUD, ABUSE, AND MISMANAGEMENT ARE REGULARLY PROVIDED BY THE GAO, THE CBO, THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET, AND CONGRESS. OUTSIDE OF THE GOVERNMENT, THINK TANKS, ADVOCACY GROUPS, AND PRIVATE-SECTOR COMPANIES ALSO PROVIDE ONGOING ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES. FOR EXAMPLE, SINCE 1993, CAGW HAS RELEASED *PRIME CUTS*, A COMPENDIUM OF RECOMMENDATIONS THAT EMANATE FROM BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES; SOME STILL DATE BACK TO THE GRACE COMMISSION.

THE MOST RECENT EDITION OF *PRIME CUTS* IDENTIFIED 557 RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WOULD SAVE TAXPAYERS \$580.6 BILLION IN THE FIRST YEAR AND \$1.8 TRILLION OVER FIVE YEARS. *PRIME CUTS* CAN SERVE AS A BLUEPRINT TO CUT GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND PUT THE NATION ON A PATH TOWARD FISCAL STABILITY.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, CAGW PRODUCES OTHER THOUGHTFUL, WELL-RESEARCHED ARTICLES, ISSUE BRIEFS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS TARGETED TOWARDS SPENDING BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF DEB COLLIER, CAGW COMPLETED A RESEARCH PROJECT WHERE WE TRIED TO USE SOME OF THE TRANSPARENCY

TOOLS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AND WE OFFER IT TODAY AS AN EXAMPLE FOR THE BOARD'S CONSIDERATION.

WE KNOW THAT TECHNOLOGY IS AVAILABLE THAT CAN HELP BRIDGE THE GAP IN TRANSPARENCY BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE TAXPAYERS IT SERVES. THIS TECHNOLOGY MUST BE USED EFFICIENTLY BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION NEEDED TO IMPROVE THAT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

IN OCTOBER 2012, CAGW PUBLISHED AN ISSUE BRIEF ENTITLED "GOVERNMENT MOBILE APPS PROLIFERATE." THIS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE WASTEFUL AND OFTEN DUPLICATIVE NATURE OF FEDERAL MOBILE APPLICATIONS. FREQUENTLY, THESE MOBILE APPS DUPLICATED EFFORTS ALREADY BEING MADE BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR, OR BY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.

IN RESEARCHING GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON MOBILE APPS, CAGW STAFF REVIEWED INFORMATION ON *USA.GOV* TO LEARN WHAT MOBILE APPS HAD BEEN DEVELOPED, FEDERAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES (*FEDBIZOP*) TO LEARN ABOUT UPCOMING CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE GOVERNMENT MOBILE APPS, THE FEDERAL REGISTER AND *USASPENDING.GOV* TO DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING SPENT ON MOBILE APPS. AS NOTED IN THE REPORT, WHILE IT IS EASY TO FIND AVAILABLE APPS THROUGH THE *USA.GOV* WEBSITE, IT WAS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO DISCERN THE EXPENDITURE TO DEVELOP EACH

APP. SEARCHES ON *FEDBIZOP* AND *USASPENDING.GOV* REVEALED SCANT INFORMATION ON LINE-ITEM SPENDING.

CAGW STAFF ALSO REVIEWED INDIVIDUAL AGENCY WEBSITES TO FIND INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT MOBILE APP spending, PRIMARILY FOR THOSE APPS THAT WERE ISSUED THROUGH AGENCY SPONSORED COMPETITIONS WITH AWARDS RANGING FROM \$2,000 TO \$30,000 FOR EACH WINNING APPLICATION. HOWEVER, THERE IS OFTEN LITTLE INDICATION ON AGENCY WEBSITES AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE AGENCY PARTNERED WITH A PRIVATE SECTOR SPONSOR TO HELP PAY THE PRIZE AWARDS, OR IF THE TAXPAYER FOOTED THE ENTIRE BILL.

TO FORMULATE A “BACK OF THE ENVELOPE” ESTIMATE OF TOTAL COSTS FOR APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE ON *USA.GOV*’S WEBSITE, CAGW TURNED TO PUBLISHED PRIVATE SECTOR INDUSTRY EXPERTS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE APPROXIMATE COSTS FOR SUCH MOBILE APPS. USING THEIR ESTIMATES OF BETWEEN \$10,000 TO \$200,000 WITH AN AVERAGE COST OF \$30,000 DEPENDING ON LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY, CAGW ESTIMATED THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD PAID APPROXIMATELY \$3.6 MILLION FOR THE 120 MOBILE APPS IT HAD ALREADY DEPLOYED BY THE END OF 2012.

TO SAY THAT USING THE *USASPENDING.GOV* WEBSITE WAS FRUSTRATING IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT. SEARCHES USING TERMS SUCH AS “MOBILE APP,” “MOBILE APPLICATION,” “WEBSITE,” AND “MOBILE” YIELDED MANY MORE SEARCH RESULTS THAN WERE APPLICABLE TO THE PROJECT AT HAND, YET

EACH DIFFERENT SEARCH CRITERIA YIELDED SOME NEW INSTANCES OF THE CREATION OF A NEW MOBILE APP NOT PREVIOUSLY FOUND. THIS CONTINUES THROUGH TODAY. FOR EXAMPLE, A RECENT SEARCH ON THE *USASPENDING.GOV* WEBSITE FOR THE TERM “MOBILE APP” FOUND CONTRACTS FOR HAND-TOOLS; LECTURES FOR TRAINING; MODIFICATIONS TO CONTRACTS FOR SOLAR POWER UPGRADES TO THE NATIONAL SOLAR THERMAL TEST FACILITY; AND, FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT IN ADDITION TO E-BOOKS AND MOBILE APPS FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

HOWEVER, A SEARCH FOR CLOUD COMPUTING SERVICES on *USASPENDING.GOV* PROVIDES MUCH CLEARER INFORMATION ABOUT SPENDING FOR THESE SERVICES, IN PART BECAUSE THE AGENCIES ARE USING STANDARD TERMINOLOGY TO DEFINE CLOUD COMPUTING SERVICES IN THEIR DESCRIPTIONS. THIS MAY BE DUE TO THE PRIORITIZATION OF CLOUD COMPUTING SERVICES UNDER THE “CLOUD FIRST” PROVISIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATION’S 25-POINT PLAN TO REFORM FEDERAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. THESE CONTRACTS ARE VERY SPECIFIC TO CLOUD COMPUTING SERVICES, AND PROVIDE A BETTER PICTURE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT’S TOTAL SPENDING ON THESE SERVICES.

IN COMPARING THESE TWO SEARCHES, IT IS EVIDENT THAT CLEARLY DEFINED STANDARD TERMINOLOGY MUST BE USED AND AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC FOR EACH TYPE OF PRODUCT OR SERVICES WHERE INFORMATION IS BEING SOUGHT. IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO USE *USASPENDING.GOV* AS THE BASELINE STRUCTURE FOR TRANSPARENCY IN

FEDERAL SPENDING, SEARCH CRITERIA MUST BE STANDARDIZED, DEFINED AND CONSISTENTLY USED BY THOSE ENTERING THE DATA. OTHERWISE, LOCATING INFORMATION ABOUT SPENDING ON VARIOUS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES WILL REMAIN DIFFICULT FOR THE AVERAGE USER.

CAGW'S RESEARCH DIRECTOR SEAN KENNEDY ALSO USED THE *USASPENDING.GOV* WEBSITE. MR. KENNEDY IS ROUTINELY CHARGED WITH DETERMINING FUNDING LEVELS FOR PARTICULAR RESEARCH PROJECTS. THIS CAN INCLUDE RESEARCHING FUNDING FOR A PARTICULAR PROGRAM, WHICH MIGHT ENTAIL LOOKING UP THE APPROPRIATED AMOUNT, THE HOUSE, SENATE, OR CONFERENCE VERSION OF THE APPROPRIATED AMOUNT, WHETHER OR NOT THE PROGRAM RECEIVED A FUNDING REQUEST FROM THE ADMINISTRATION, AND SO ON.

AT OTHER TIMES, HE ATTEMPTED TO USE *USASPENDING.GOV* TO DETERMINE MORE MACRO FIGURES, SUCH AS HOW MUCH A PARTICULAR AGENCY RECEIVED IN FUNDING COMPARED TO PRIOR YEARS.

*USASPENDING.GOV* AND *RECOVERY.GOV* WERE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IN RESEARCHING ITEMS CONTAINED IN THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009. THE SEARCH TOOLS ALLOWED USERS INSIGHT INTO VARIOUS STIMULUS PROGRAMS THAT WAS NOT AVAILABLE IN A COMPREHENSIVE FORM ELSEWHERE. THIS INCLUDED TRACKING REPAYMENT SCHEDULES FOR STIMULUS FUNDING, WHEN APPLICABLE. THESE SITES ARE ALSO HELPFUL TO DETERMINE INFORMATION RELATING TO CONTRACTORS.



UNFORTUNATELY, THESE WEBSITES LOST THEIR UTILITY WHEN GIVEN THE EXISTENCE OF OUTSIDE RESEARCH TOOLS. ACCORDING TO MR. KENNEDY, *USASPENDING.GOV* DOES NOT RESPOND WELL WHEN A RESEARCHER ATTEMPTS TO LOCATE SPECIFIC FUNDING LEVELS OF PROGRAMS OR PURCHASED ITEMS. FOR INSTANCE, TRYING TO LOCATE THE AMOUNT OF MONEY DIRECTED TOWARD AN ITEM SUCH AS THE M1 ABRAMS TANK BY THE DOD IN A GIVEN YEAR IS A DIFFICULT TASK. IN ADDITION, THERE IS LITTLE SOPHISTICATION TO THE INFORMATION: THE USER IS NOT ABLE TO DETERMINE WHERE THE FUNDING REQUEST ORIGINATED, WHETHER IT WAS INITIATED BY CONGRESS, REQUESTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, OR IF IT WAS AN ADMINISTRATION REQUEST THAT WAS FURTHER AUGMENTED BY CONGRESS.

FOR THIS EXAMPLE, IT IS MUCH EASIER TO CONSULT THE RELEVANT LEGISLATION. WHILE THESE BILLS ARE ALSO NOT PARTICULARLY SEARCHABLE, USERS WILL GET BETTER RESULTS USING THE SOURCE DOCUMENTS.

WHILE WE RECOGNIZE VARIOUS SHORTCOMINGS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM, WE WOULD NOT SUGGEST SCRAPPING THE PLATFORM: INSTEAD, WE WOULD PREFER THAT THE CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE, TO INCLUDE LESSONS LEARNED FROM ITS IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE, BE REMEDIED, RATHER THAN STARTING OVER FROM SCRATCH. INDEED, CAGW IS LOATH TO ADD ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF REDUNDANT, OVERLAPPING, OR DUPLICATIVE PROCUREMENT OF FEDERAL I.T. ASSETS TO OUR CURRENT ROGUE'S GALLERY OF WASTE. WE ALREADY KNOW THAT FEDERAL I.T. MISMANAGEMENT IS A LONG-STANDING

PROBLEM. FROM 2001 TO 2012, FEDERAL IT SPENDING GREW BY 76 PERCENT, FROM \$46 BILLION TO \$81 BILLION. UNFORTUNATELY, ACCORDING TO OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DARRELL ISSA'S (R-CALIF.) OPENING STATEMENT AT A JANUARY 2013 HEARING ON WASTEFUL IT SPENDING, FEDERAL MANAGERS ESTIMATE AS MUCH AS \$20 BILLION OF TAXPAYER MONEY IS SQUANDERED ON I.T. EVERY YEAR.

CAGW SHARES THE GOALS OF "OPEN DATA:" THAT IT BE STRUCTURED, STANDARDIZED, AND ACCESSIBLE. THE TRANSFORMATION OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION – "FROM PAPER AND PLAIN TEXT TO OPEN DATA," AS ESPOUSED BY THE DATA TRANSPARENCY COALITION (or DTC) – REQUIRES TWO CONCEPTUALLY SIMPLE STEPS THAT BECOME VERY DIFFICULT IN PRACTICE: FIRST, APPLY CONSISTENT DATA STANDARDS—COMMON IDENTIFIERS, UNIFORM FORMATS, AND THE LIKE—ACROSS DIVERSE AGENCIES AND SYSTEMS. SECOND, PUBLISH THE COMPILATION ONLINE SO THAT IT CAN BE SEARCHED AND SCRUTINIZED BY EVERYONE.

THE LEGISLATIVE VEHICLE FOR DATA TRANSPARENCY IN SPENDING IS THE DIGITAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, OR DATA ACT, WHICH WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY INTRODUCED IN THE HOUSE (H.R. 2061) AND SENATE (S. 994) ON MAY 21, 2013.

OF COURSE, AS IS OFTEN THE CASE WITH THE SAUSAGE-LIKE BUSINESS OF LEGISLATING, CHALLENGES REMAIN FOR THE DATA ACT.

UNFORTUNATELY, AMENDMENTS APPROVED BY THE SENATE HSGAC REMOVED CRITICAL HOUSE-PASSED ELEMENTS THAT ARE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW. TO PUT IT BLUNTLY, THE LEGISLATION WILL BE NEUTERED IF THE COMMITTEE'S VERSION IS ENACTED. THE ACCOUNTABILITY PLATFORM PROVIDED IN THE BILL (THE CURRENT RECOVERY BOARD) IS SCHEDULED TO CEASE OPERATIONS IN 2015.

THE BILL, AS INTRODUCED AND PASSED BY THE HOUSE, INCLUDED THE CONTINUATION OF THE BOARD, WHICH WOULD AVOID REINVENTING THE WHEEL TO CREATE A NEW OVERSIGHT AGENCY.

THE \$20 MILLION ANNUAL COST TO RUN THE RECOVERY BOARD WOULD BE MORE THAN OFFSET BY THE BILLIONS SAVED FROM ILLUMINATING AND ELIMINATING WASTE.

THE EXCISION OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY PLATFORM WAS ALSO ACCOMPANIED BY THE REMOVAL OF ONE OF THE BILL'S KEY GOALS: TO "PREVENT WASTE, FRAUD, ABUSE, AND IMPROPER PAYMENTS." THIS DECLAWING OF THE LEGISLATION IS CLEARLY SELF-DEFEATING. AS THE DTC POINTS OUT, "WITHOUT ANY INTERNAL GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO USE THE NEWLY-STANDARD- IZED SPENDING DATA FOR ANY PURPOSE, THERE WILL BE NO INTERNAL PRESSURE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF DATA PUBLISHED ON USASPENDING.GOV."

HOPEFULLY, THE INTEGRITY OF THE BILL'S ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS CAN BE RESTORED AHEAD OF FINAL SENATE PASSAGE AND ULTIMATE

ENACTMENT. FOR THE LEGISLATION TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS, REPORTING AGENCIES MUST UNDERSTAND, FIRST, THAT THEIR OVERSEERS ARE REVIEWING THE DATA PROVIDED, THUS NECESSITATING ITS ACCURACY, AND, SECOND, THAT CONSEQUENCES WILL ACCRUE TO THOSE WHOSE INFORMATION IS FLAWED. IF THESE CRITERIA ARE RESTORED AND SIGNED INTO LAW, THE DATA ACT WILL BE TRANSFORMATIONAL.

WITH REGARD TO THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY BOARD, WE HOPE THAT THIS ADVISORY BOARD RECOGNIZES THE MERITS OF THESE EFFORTS. WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO COLLABORATE, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ON ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS ESPOUSED HEREIN. WITH THAT IN MIND, CAGW PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD:

1. CAGW BELIEVES THAT IT IS CRITICAL THAT OMB SET UP A STANDARD OF TERMINOLOGY THAT IS NOT TO BE STRAYED FROM FOR INPUTTING DATA INTO USASPENDING.GOV, AND MAKE THOSE TERMS PUBLICALLY AVAILABLE AS SEARCH CRITERIA FOR THE DATABASE. UNLESS THERE ARE STRINGENT RULES RELATING TO THE TERMINOLOGY, AND POSITIVE ENFORCEMENT OF THOSE RULES, THE WEBSITE WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE INCONSISTENT RESULTS.
2. SPECIFIC FUNDING, OBLIGATIONS AND ACTUAL SPENDING LEVELS OF EACH PROGRAM OR PURCHASED ITEM SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN DETAIL ON THE WEBSITE.
3. A LINK TO WHETHER THE PROGRAM OR PURCHASED ITEM WAS FUNDED THROUGH APPROPRIATIONS BY THE SENATE OR HOUSE, WITH A LINK TO THE AUTHORIZING LANGUAGE, APPROPRIATIONS BILL, AND ADMINISTRATION REQUEST SHOULD ALSO BE INCLUDED.

4. MACRO LEVEL DATA, SUCH AS AGENCY FUNDING LEVELS FROM YEAR TO YEAR, WOULD ALSO PROVIDE BETTER CONTEXT.
5. SYNTHESIZING SEARCH RESULTS IN A MANNER THAT IS HELPFUL TO THE USER WOULD PROVIDE THE LARGEST IMPROVEMENT. CURRENTLY, SEARCH TERMS RETURN A DISORGANIZED LIST OF INFORMATION.

CLEARLY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SUCH AS RISK ASSESSMENTS COULD ALSO BE INCORPORATED INTO *USASPENDING.GOV*. HOWEVER, AGAIN, IT IS CRITICAL FOR THIS INFORMATION TO BE ENTERED IN A STANDARD FORMAT, AND RECLASSIFICATION OF INVESTMENTS SHOULD BE RESTRAINED. IN DECEMBER 2013, GAO ISSUED A REPORT ON THE IT DASHBOARD, A TOOL USED BY AGENCY C.I.O.'s TO TRACK THE PROGRESS OF I.T. PROGRAMS ACROSS THE GOVERNMENT, BASED ON RISK ASSESSMENTS RATED AS HIGH, MEDIUM, OR LOW. GAO FOUND THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER OF INVESTMENTS REPORTED BY THE AGENCIES "VARIED OVER TIME, IN PART DUE TO VARIED CLASSIFICATIONS OF INVESTMENTS, WHICH IMPACTS THE NUMBER OF INVESTMENTS RECEIVING CIO RATINGS."<sup>1</sup>

FOR EXAMPLE, THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RE-CLASSIFIED SEVERAL OF ITS SUPERCOMPUTER INVESTMENTS FROM THE IT CATEGORY TO A FACILITIES CLASSIFICATION, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE RE-CLASSIFIED ITS

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<sup>1</sup> "IT Dashboard: Agencies are Managing Investment Risk, but Related Ratings Need to Be More Accurate and Available," United States Government Accountability Office, GAO-14-64, December 2013,

<http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/659666.pdf>.

SATELLITE GROUND SYSTEMS INVESTMENTS, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE CLEARLY I.T. INVESTMENTS.

BEFORE CONCLUDING OUR PRESENTATION, WE BEG THE BOARD'S INDULGENCE IN REMEMBERING THE JOHN GODFREY SAXE POEM, "THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT." THE ESSENCE OF THIS POEM HAS BEEN EMPLOYED IN DISCUSSION OFTEN, AND I AM SURE MOST – PERHAPS ALL – OF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH ITS PREMISE, WHICH DEALS WITH AN INDIVIDUAL'S NARROW PERSPECTIVE.

SAXE RECOUNTS THE EXPERIENCE OF SIX MEN FROM INDOSTAN, EACH DESCRIBED AS MUCH INCLINED TO LEARNING, WHO WENT TO SEE AN ELEPHANT, "...[T]HOUGH ALL OF THEM WERE BLIND..." EACH BLIND MAN TOOK HIS TURN AT OBSERVING THE ELEPHANT. THE FIRST, WHO FELL AGAINST THE ELEPHANT'S "BROAD AND STURDY SIDE," INFERRED THAT THE CREATURE WAS "VERY LIKE A WALL!"

THE SECOND HAPPENED ON THE TUSK, EXCLAIMING THAT THE ELEPHANT WAS "VERY LIKE A SPEAR!" THE THIRD BLIND MAN TOOK THE SQUIRMING TRUNK IN HIS HANDS AND DECIDED THAT THE ELEPHANT WAS A SNAKE, WHILE THE FOURTH FELT THE ELEPHANT'S KNEE AND DETERMINED THAT IT WAS A TREE. THE FIFTH, "WHO CHANCED TO TOUCH THE EAR," ASSUMED THAT THE ELEPHANT WAS A FAN. THE SIXTH AND FINAL BLIND MAN, SEIZING UPON THE ELEPHANT'S TAIL, ASSUMED THAT IT WAS A ROPE.

BUT THE MORAL OF SAXE'S POEM CAN BE FOUND IN THE FINAL STANZA,  
WHICH READS LIKE THIS:

*AND SO THESE MEN OF INDOSTAN,  
DISPUTED LOUD AND LONG,  
EACH IN HIS OWN OPINION  
EXCEEDING STIFF AND STRONG,  
THOUGH EACH WAS PARTLY IN THE RIGHT,  
AND ALL WERE IN THE WRONG!*

THE SAME CAN BE SAID ABOUT INFORMATION. IF WE CANNOT VIEW THE  
SAME OBJECT – PARTICULARLY ONE THAT IS AS GARGANTUAN AS AN  
ELEPHANT OR THE EXPENDITURES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT – THROUGH  
THE SAME LENS, THEN WE WILL INEVITABLY MISS THE BIG PICTURE.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, THIS IS A MANAGEMENT ISSUE: THE PROPER  
MANAGEMENT OF MONIES PROVIDED BY THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER.  
REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS IN SURPLUS OR  
DEFICIT, THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR MISMANAGING THE TAXPAYERS' MONEY.  
BETTER STEWARDSHIP OF THE TAXPAYERS' MONEY SHOULD BE THE MANTRA  
FOR EVERY MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND EVERY FEDERAL PROGRAM  
ADMINISTRATOR. WITH A LITTLE EFFORT, CURRENT TOOLS CAN HELP TO MEET  
THIS STANDARD.

WE APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT OUR PERSPECTIVES TO  
THE BOARD, AND WE WOULD BE GLAD TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS.