STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE,
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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Minority Member Marchant, and Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the invitation to appear before you today to discuss the General Services Administration's (GSA's) view on why and how some telework programs succeed. You will note that I did not mention the issue of why some programs fail. That's because, in our experience, once effectively implemented, very few if any Federal telework programs fail. In our opinion, therefore, the issue is why programs succeed and what can be done to facilitate this success.

We have experience with our own agency's program as well as experience with successful programs sponsored by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). But after more than 15 years of continuing efforts to build a robust and vital Federal telework program, levels of participation are still not as high as they can and should be.

Successful implementation of telework in the Federal Government involves useful policies, implementation guidance, effective tools, program support, pro-active senior leadership, and culture change. These characteristics are evident in successful telework programs such as those at the Department of Commerce's Patent and Trademark Office and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

Telework programs succeed when they have the basic tools necessary to support the program. Legislation that would remove barriers to Federal Telework is welcomed, and we look forward to working with Congress on appropriate telework legislation. One legislative area that might be addressed is travel pay associated with long-distance telework, that is, telework from locations beyond the local commuting area of the employing organization's facility where the employee would work but for the telework arrangement. Under existing law, these long-distance telework arrangements typically require an increase in agency travel expenses, since the telework location is the employee's official duty station for pay and travel purposes. For example, if a Patent and Trademark Office employee chooses to live in San Francisco and telework to the PTO's

Alexandria, Virginia location, and if the PTO requires the employee to occasionally report to the Alexandria location, the PTO is responsible for the travel costs since it is considered travel away from the employee's official duty station, even though it was the employee's decision to live in San Francisco instead of Northern Virginia. These travel costs serve as a disincentive to establishing such arrangements and hamper potential beneficial program

expansion. Making the payment of such travel expenses optional could help agencies with their efforts to retain valued employees, who would like the choice of living somewhere else even if they would have to pay to travel back for a meeting once and a while, and remove a barrier to the expansion of successful telework in the Federal Government. We support PTO's recent informal draft bill that would amend 5 U.S.C. 5710 to extend GSA authority to approve travel expense test programs that would allow agencies to test new and innovative methods of reimbursing travel expenses and giving employees more choices of where to live.

Useful Guidance

Another factor leading to successful telework is clear and effective operating guidance. Last year, GSA published Federal Management Regulation (FMR) Bulletin 2006-B3, which established guidelines for agencies implementing and operating alternative workplace arrangements in the Federal sector. This document helps agencies resolve commonly encountered telework implementation issues, such as the provision of workplace equipment to teleworkers and the payment of utility costs for alternative worksites.

This year, we followed up with FMR Bulletin 2007-B1, "Information Technology and Telecommunications Guidelines for Federal Telework and Other Alternative Workplace Arrangement Programs." This document, which integrated guidance from the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Office of Management and Budget, the Government Accountability Office and GSA, was designed to help agencies identify and provide for the technology necessary for successful and secure telework programs. GSA recognized the need to provide telework technology and security information in a consolidated, easy to read format that covered technology topics such as basic equipment, telecommunications, security, privacy, training and support. By clarifying the technology, security and privacy policy guidance for telework, this document helped establish that telework, when appropriately implemented, can maintain information security. Upcoming FMR bulletins will provide further guidance on telework.

Implementation Guidance

A key tool that is increasingly important as a determinant of telework success is an adequate and secure technology infrastructure. As we all know, technological advance is both fast and complicated. Successful programs have the necessary

information to enable optimal deployment of technology. To provide this information, GSA conducted two in-depth studies and published important and useful findings which will help agencies increase their telework participation. The study findings are based on survey and other information from agency chief information officers, managers, teleworkers, telework coordinators, and others involved in telework programs. These studies are available on our website at http://www.gsa.gov/telework.

Some highlights from the research are:

- Information Technology (IT) management officials need to be more effectively engaged in telework planning, budgeting, and implementation to ensure the successful and effective incorporation of IT in telework programs.

- To create a successful enterprise-wide approach to telework and simultaneously maximize total benefits and return on investment, agencies should include telework technology in enterprise planning and architecture.

- The necessary IT security products and services that address telework-related security requirements do currently exist.

- Telework technology costs are invisible to senior executives in most organizations and most agencies are not making telework part of their agency-wide strategic vision.

In short, no IT issue is of such a degree that it is a barrier to the growth of telework and there are solutions to address the perceived barriers.

An examination of telework programs shows that flexible implementation is another key to making programs a success. Along those lines, Congress and GSA have long known that while home-based telework is fine for the majority of teleworkers, it does not work for many who have personal or work-related issues that require a different setting than their homes. As a result, Congress and GSA established a Telework Centers pilot project in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. These Centers, managed by GSA, offer Federal and non-Federal workers a convenient and effective telework alternative to working at home. The services and amenities available at the Centers include typical workstation and office equipment, Internet access, workspace options ranging from private and semi-

private offices to cubicles, and conference rooms with videoconferencing capability. Currently, the Centers are located between 16 and 80 miles from downtown DC. Telework Centers add the program flexibility needed to make telework a successful option for those who want to avoid the commute but still need to get out of the house.

Effective Tools

GSA also provides agencies a useful cost analysis tool called the Cost Per Person Model (CPPM). The CPPM is an Excel-based tool designed to enable users to benchmark and compute the cost per person for workspace, information technology, telecommunications, telework and other alternative work environments. This tool can also calculate potential cost savings for different workspace scenarios. A copy of the CPPM can be requested online at http://www.gsa.gov/cppm.

Specific features of the Cost Per Person Model:

- Enables Federal agencies to compute separately or in aggregate the cost per person for workspace, telecommunications, information technology and alternative costs

- Compares the cost of working in an office facility versus alternative work environments

- Provides both national and regional benchmark costs for workspace, information technology, telecommunications and alternative work environments

- Depicts cost per person results using graphs

- Calculates potential cost savings for various workspace, information technology, telecommunications and alternative work environments

- Offers a user-friendly manual with step-by-step instructions

Program Support

Finally, successful programs ensure that the entire workforce is aware of telework laws, policies, benefits and practices. To that end, our efforts include a very active listserv and website along with videos, promotion materials, press

releases, and beneficial partnerships with advocacy organizations. GSA recently posted the following web-based program promotion materials:

- New Flash Video - This is the first flash video ever to be posted on GSA's website. Complete with both video and synched music, it can be viewed at http://www.gsa.gov/teleworkvideo. A looping file of the video is also available to use in making presentations and staffing exhibits.

- New "4 Easy Steps to Register and Start Using a Telework Center" process - The registration process is now stated in "4 Easy Steps" with interactive website links. These may be found just below the video at http://www.gsa.gov/teleworkvideo and in a series of new publications now offered at http://www.gsa.gov/teleworklibrary.

- New Interactive Map to Locate Telework Centers - Website visitors may now locate a center and see what it looks like by just clicking on the link at "Easy Step," number 2. Just scroll to a center location to view it or click on it to find the exact address and rate.

- New Publications and Poster - Agency telework coordinators and other website visitors will now find several new publications and a telework centers poster at http://www.gsa.gov/teleworklibrary under "Telework Promotion Materials" and "Telework Centers Resource Materials."

Pro-Active Senior Leadership

Another critical ingredient in successful programs is aggressive top-level involvement and support. A good example of this is the recently issued challenge by our Administrator, Lurita Doan. She is pushing the agency to "lead by example" and to increase the number of eligible employees participating in telework. The goal is to have 50% of eligible GSA employees teleworking at least one or two days per week by the end of calendar year 2010. She has also set interim goals of achieving a participation rate of 20% by the end of calendar year 2008 and of 40% by the end of calendar year 2009. GSA participation in telework is already more than twice the Federal proportion.

In furtherance of leading by example and prior to any legislative requirement, GSA has appointed a "Telework Managing Officer" as called for in both the Senate and House versions of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2007. Furthermore, to streamline bill paying procedures and thereby increase

incentives for GSA organizations to utilize telework centers, the Administrator is creating a central fund set aside for Telework Center user fees and centralizing the fee payment process. Thus, managers can approve an employee to use a telework center and simply send a request to the central fund instead of the Telework Center user fees being taken from the manager's budget.

Pro-actively demonstrating that she is walking the walk, Administrator Doan recently spent the day working at one of the GSA-sponsored Telework Centers and announced plans to continue teleworking every month. The Administrator has made it clear that this effort is the next step toward using telework to its fullest advantage as we accomplish the wide range of work that we have to do across the agency, including encouraging other agencies to challenge themselves to use telework to its greatest advantage and supporting their efforts through our Federal Acquisition Service and our Public Building Service offerings. The Administrator believes that GSA's Workplace Solutions can be an effective tool for improving agencies' telework participation.

Culture Change

GSA is also establishing an internal policy and system for classifying jobs as telework eligible. This system will boost the continuity, efficiency, and equity of our telework program. We are also establishing formal telework agreements for all teleworkers, regardless of whether or not they are regular teleworkers. In addition to providing a consistent telework platform for program, COOP, and resource planning, this will go a long way in helping to eliminate the large security risk typically associated with informal telework.

Within the past year, GSA has also incorporated telework codes within our Electronic Time and Attendance Management System (ETAMS) which allow employees to capture hours spent teleworking. These codes reflect current GSA policy on telework and will allow monitoring of telework participation. The agency is also, in conjunction with development of enhanced telework policy, considering additional options for tracking telework.

Benefits

Telework programs are successful because they also take advantage of the many beneficial applications of telework. Aside from the many environmental and family-friendly aspects, investments in telework support other critical agency-

wide objectives, including IT modernization efforts, support of mobile workers, and legislative compliance. It is also a key tool in our efforts to prepare for national emergencies such as pandemics and natural disasters.

There has been widespread interest in the incorporation of telework as a mechanism for emergency Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans. This is a natural benefit of telework, but you cannot wait until an emergency to implement a COOP telework program. Federal agencies must have a viable telework program in place as part of a normal operation plan so that employees can fully transition to this alternative work arrangement in the event of an emergency. The result is a properly trained and equipped work force that is allowed to participate in telework to the maximum extent possible.

Other valuable telework applications include:

- Combining telework with alternative officing to enable agencies to reduce costs and improve the utilization of existing facilities.

- Utilizing remote alternative worksites to accommodate workers who need to work in a high security environment and/or are adversely affected by Base Relocation programs.

- Enhancing recruitment and retention of Federal workers by improving work/life balance.

Using estimated averages based on agency responses to a survey conducted by the GSA, an investment of approximately $16 million over three years to provide a "basic" teleworker-at-home solution for 50,000 teleworkers at an agency with 100,000 staff can, in appropriate circumstances, be offset with a realization of over $36 million in benefits over the same three-year period.

Conclusion

In conclusion, GSA believes that effective telework programs can and are being implemented by Federal agencies. These programs can be cost-effective and significantly reduce traffic, improve air quality, and reduce the dependence on foreign sources of oil. They can also provide additional value in the areas of continuity, recruitment and retention of staff, and quality of life for our Federal workforce. The ingredients of successful programs include pro-active top-level leadership, clear guidelines, solid program support and integration of telework into overall agency planning, utilization of telework applications and recommended practices, and high-visibility program promotion.

I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (NOT PRESENTED IN HEARING)

TELEWORK AT GSA

Of a total of 12,205 employees at GSA, 11,190 or 92 percent are potentially eligible for telework based on their job classification. GSA is currently reviewing all positions as part of the annual assessment process to ascertain the eligibility of each position.

The following table is a summary of telework participation at GSA:

Telework Participation

Type of Telework	Number of Employees	Average Days Per Month
Core Telework		
3 or more days/week	305	12*
1 or 2 days/week	761	4 or 8
Non-Core Telework		
At least once/month	490	Unknown
Intermittent	Unknown	
Total	1,556	

* The level of participation for employees teleworking three or more days per week ranges from that three day minimum to five days per week