Opening Statement of Chairman Gerald E. Connolly
Hearing on "Project Federal Information Technology: Make IT Work"
September 16, 2022

This June, the Office of the Federal Chief Information Officer, led by today's witness, Ms. Clare Martorana, published the Information Technology Operating Plan. This plan outlined the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) strategy to maximize the impact of federal IT funds.

As someone who has dedicated decades to championing IT modernization, across both the private and public sector, I was heartened to see the plan encompass many of this Subcommittee's long-standing priorities.

During my tenure, we have held 14 hearings and released 14 Scorecards grading agencies' implementation of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act. FITARA, as it's called, promotes proper IT practices across federal agencies. Every Scorecard iteration reflects contemporary shifts within the IT landscape – evolving as needed with changes in modernization and cybersecurity best practices to hold agencies' CIOs accountable for ensuring proper IT postures. Since the Scorecard's inception, agencies have saved an estimated $29 billion in taxpayers' money.

Similarly, the Federal Chief Information Officer's new technology plan provides a solid roadmap to continue the vital work of improving our federal IT systems to better serve families, businesses, and communities.

Today, we will hear the Federal CIO present her vision for the future of federal IT.

This moment is a crossroad in how government operates. The pandemic fundamentally changed what people expect from government – and how they access programs, information, and resources from it. We do not want to lose any lessons learned. And we want to empower federal CIOs to scale IT solutions that worked.

Today we will explore in depth the Federal CIO's four IT focus areas: cybersecurity, IT modernization, digital-first customer experience, and use of data as a strategic asset.

I'm pleased that cybersecurity remains a top priority for the Biden Administration. In 2020, the SolarWinds supply chain cyber-attack blindsided top security experts across the world. This attack catalyzed the reevaluation and modernization of our nation's cybersecurity strategy.

Since the attack, OMB has reengineered a new risk-based cybersecurity regime using new metrics to measure and assess federal agencies' cyber posture. In December 2021, OMB shifted government towards a zero-trust architecture, focused on ground truth testing, observable security outcomes, and automation. Today, we will hear more about the work OMB has done to change the culture of federal IT and are eager to dig into their recently released memorandum on Enhancing the Security of the Software Supply Chain through Secure Software Development Practices.

We will also discuss how the Subcommittee will work with OMB to ensure we have publicly available data for the

FITARA Scorecard to hold CIOs accountable to implementing these cybersecurity lessons.

Additionally, as co-Chair of the IT Modernization Caucus, I am intimately familiar with the problems caused by agencies failure to modernize. A GAO report found that "The consequences of not updating legacy systems has contributed to, among other things, security risks, unmet mission needs, staffing issues, and increased costs."

Successful modernization demands constant action and nimble solutions that keep pace with rapidly shifting IT ecosystems.

I am proud to have helped successfully secure a revolutionary $1 billion for the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF). The TMF reimagined the way agencies receive financing, offering opportunities outside of the traditional appropriations process – facilitating long-term planning and providing expert assistance. To date the Fund has awarded almost $600 million to 28 unclassified projects across 17 federal agencies. Despite this massive investment, agencies need more. At our May hearing with TMF's Executive Director, she noted that 60 agencies have applied for over 130 projects, which would require more than $2.5 billion in funding. We must continue to support this fund and seed agency efforts to ensure their IT systems are prepared for any challenge.

I also want to highlight the Biden Administration's Executive Order focused on improving federal service delivery and customer experience. These combined factors are key to rebuilding the public's trust in the government and preserving democracy.

The Federal CIO has told this committee in previous hearings that improving customer experience is her passion. We aim to find ways to jointly hold agencies accountable for making it easier for all people to interact with the federal government through user friendly websites and careful attention to accessibility.

Every day, people transition seamlessly between the digital and physical world. The pandemic pushed more of us to telework from home, scan a QR code to order dinner at a restaurant, or Zoom with loved ones. In the same way we depend on technology to serve the public, serving the public well depends on data. Data ensures that only those who qualify for federal benefits can access them. Data helps agencies create hiring strategies to get the talent they need to serve the public. Data helps agencies prioritize IT investments and find ways to share services across federal agencies.

Today, I am interested to hear from Ms. Martorana how government can maximize both cost savings and better service delivery. I also seek to find opportunities for the Subcommittee to work with the Biden Administration to ensure our government is meeting this pivotal technology moment.

<center>###</center>

Contact: Nelly Decker, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181