

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM ZIELINSKI
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CATEGORY
U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
BEFORE THE HOUSE OVERSIGHT AND REFORM COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

March 4, 2020

Chairman Connolly, Ranking Member Meadows, and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Bill Zielinski, and I am the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Information Technology (IT) Category in the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Acquisition Service (FAS). I also serve as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) designated government-wide IT Category Manager. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the important role GSA plays in the government's IT priorities.

Core to our mission is the modernization and security of the government's IT infrastructure and applications.

My office helps agencies navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by IT modernization efforts, implementing new security controls for the government's supply chain, and making IT purchasing more efficient. Our top priorities focus on maximizing agencies' mission effectiveness in a number of ways, including:

Providing all agencies a suite of IT and telecommunications solutions using our IT and acquisition expertise;

Supplying emerging technology and innovations government-wide, while fostering small business participation, and;

Reducing the number of duplicative contracts through vendor and spend under management efforts.

In FY19, my office facilitated \$26 billion in government spend related to IT, with \$1.59 billion in cost savings for taxpayers.

Government-wide/GSA Coordination Efforts

While my team in the GSA IT Category brings significant capabilities in facilitating the modernization of the government's IT infrastructure and applications, it is through partnerships across GSA, agencies government-wide, and our industry partners that we are able to deliver exceptional solutions for agencies at every step of the IT lifecycle.

I work in close coordination with OMB's Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and the Office of Electronic Government (eGov) to review federal IT spend, determine where opportunities exist to collaborate on the acquisition of IT products and services, and implement IT Category strategies to improve outcomes and get more value from IT dollars.

Across GSA, my colleagues in the Office of Government-wide Policy, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, as well as FAS's Office of Policy and Compliance, Office of Assisted Acquisition Services (AAS), and Technology Transformation Services (TTS), together comprise a high-performing team of IT, policy, and acquisition experts.

We are directing significant efforts to deliver on Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goal #1 *"Modernize IT to increase productivity and security"* in the President's Management Agenda (PMA) and on GSA's Strategic Goal to *"Improve the way agencies, buy, build and use technology."*

Working together, each of these offices are critical in delivering on all aspects of IT modernization, supply chain risk management, cybersecurity, and an improved, easy and efficient procurement environment for federal agencies.

Key Policy Initiatives and Legislation

Several policy initiatives and legislative actions related to upgrading systems and securing federal IT are driving our 2020 priorities.

The 2017 *"Report to the President on Federal IT Modernization"* lays out a strategic plan that improves the security posture of federal IT and provides key goals and initiatives related to IT modernization and security.

The report recognizes that current practices must undergo fundamental, non-incremental change to successfully modernize something as large and complex as federal government IT.

Also included as part of that report are a number of actions related directly to the work we do at GSA to assist agencies in their efforts to modernize and secure the government's networks and systems. The Enterprise Infrastructure Solutions, or EIS contract, helps federal agencies modernize with mission-critical telecommunications, infrastructure, and IT services. EIS is the backbone of the federal government's IT modernization efforts and has great promise to facilitate major improvements, efficiencies, and savings. We are laser-focused on working with agencies to achieve the goals outlined in the report, and deliver the huge benefits inherent in transitioning off legacy contracts and systems using EIS.

I will talk more about EIS and our transition support efforts in a moment.

Additionally, federal purchasing through online marketplaces is increasing at a rapid

pace leaving the government with limited visibility into online spend, increased exposure to supply chain risk, and significant accountability and fraud concerns. We are working to establish a government-wide program to procure commercial products through partnerships with commercial e-commerce providers, as part of Section 846 of the FY18 NDAA.

Priorities, Challenges and Opportunities

Technology is critical to how every agency accomplishes its mission and serves the public. It is at the core of running mission-support operations, safeguarding critical information, and providing data driven insights for agency decision making.

The challenge of supporting, managing, and securing legacy systems significantly affects the ability of agencies to meet current and evolving mission requirements. GSA will continue its mission to deliver innovative and secure technologies and IT practices to help improve government efficiency.

We are working on major programs designed to modernize and secure agencies' IT systems, products, and networks.

We are piloting emerging technology programs in our own enterprise and partnering with agencies using Artificial Intelligence (AI), Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), Machine Learning (ML), and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to develop best practices and playbooks.

We are working to educate agencies about the immense promise of 5G and will soon release a 5G Strategy that outlines IT Category activities and goals for its adoption across government.

We are also implementing Section 846 and launching a proof-of-concept in 2020 by partnering with multiple e-marketplace platforms who offer business-to-business capabilities. We expect to complete acquisition activities and launch the proof of concept this Spring and will submit a report to Congress detailing our Implementation Guidance at the end of April.

As I mentioned earlier, EIS is a government-wide contract that helps federal agencies modernize with mission-critical telecommunications, infrastructure, and IT services. For 2020, it is critical that agencies maintain their focus on their efforts to modernize and transition mission-critical services off of legacy telecommunications contracts and on to EIS.

Agencies are currently releasing solicitations and issuing task orders against EIS, and GSA is monitoring progress as well as providing extensive assistance and establishing deadlines and milestones to accelerate transition.

I cannot overstate the importance of modernizing while transitioning. GSA is optimistic that by the end of 2020, we will see considerable transition progress across government, which will be a strong indication that agencies have made major advancements in their IT modernization efforts. However, we have great concerns about slow or no activity around previous and upcoming deadlines, and we are moving to limit those agencies' use of legacy contracts.

Conclusion

The technology challenges facing federal agencies and the direct impact on the public are well-known by leaders across government and the private sector. In fact this committee has played a critical role in supporting efforts to modernize government technology. GSA continues to be an essential partner in providing solutions through, the IT Category, our Assisted Acquisition Services, the Technology Transformation Services and the GSA Office of Government-wide Policy.

Our unique mix of talent and expertise in acquisition, technology, and service delivery - combined with our government-wide scope and scale make GSA instrumental in how federal agencies buy, build, and use technology.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss GSA's priorities in 2020 and I look forward to answering any questions you have.