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April 6, 2011

Rep. George Miller (D-CA) Statement at the Hearing on “Streamlining Federal Education and Workforce Programs: A Look at the GAO Report on Government Waste”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce for the hearing on “Streamlining Federal Education and Workforce Programs: A Look at the GAO Report on Government Waste.”

Good morning and welcome Comptroller General Dodaro.

Witnesses from the Government Accountability Office aren't new to this committee.

GAO has completed some incredible work on behalf of this committee.

Your undercover investigation two years ago showed us how the Bush administration failed to respond to serious allegations of wage theft and child labor law violations.

This investigation resulted in the hiring of 200 new investigators and ordering the retraining of current investigators.

Your work about residential boot camps and abuse of special need children under the guise of discipline garnered national attention and led to legislation that passed this Committee and the House with bipartisan support.

Today, I am reintroducing that bill in this Congress. In the year since the bill passed this House, hundreds of kids have been abused and we can prevent those abuses by setting minimum safety standards.

Your food safety investigations identified major gaps within USDA that led to administrative changes to protect the food our students eat in school.

In these prior investigations, GAO reports told us a great deal about what the need is on the ground and where the avenues for action might be.

The report before us today is of a different nature.

There is absolutely a need to identify, reduce and eliminate government waste.

It is clear from reading the testimony and related reports that when it comes to the issues within the jurisdiction of this committee, the relevant agencies recognize the need to address many of the issues identified by GAO over the years.

On the education side, the Department of Education has taken proactive action to better align programs and consolidate where possible.

They've established working groups across agencies to better collaborate and have proposed to consolidate programming in a number of areas, including consolidating 38 teacher training programs to 11.

With Secretary Duncan at the helm, the Department has identified areas where consolidations make sense both for the taxpayer and for students, teachers and schools.

But as GAO has noted in the past, Congress must take action to address program alignment which I hope we will have a chance to address through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act this year.

In regards to job training, GAO found that there are 47 programs that spent \$18 billion to provide job training services.

I'd like to hear GAO's views on how many individuals received effective job training, how many individuals have been denied services, and what specific savings and program improvements can be achieved by consolidating administrative structures.

While the report before us today has already been the subject of congressional hearings and discussions, I hope today's hearing could somehow move us forward.

If Congress is to act to address issues of government waste, there is very specific, detailed information that we need to know about the effectiveness of the programs you reviewed.

If, on the other hand, the information we hear today is limited to what has already been reported, then this hearing that the majority has called is, unfortunately, just more government waste.

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