

**Opening Statement
Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA)
House Administration Committee Testimony**

Chairman Lungren and Ranking Member Brady, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The federal bureaucracy has been asked to absorb and disseminate an unprecedented amount of new dollars following the approval of a \$700 Billion Wall Street bailout, the \$800 billion stimulus package and a trillion-dollar health care overhaul. This new spending has resulted in a massive expansion of government and has flooded the bureaucracy with trillions of new taxpayer dollars even though adequate oversight to protect the American people's money from waste, fraud and mismanagement is severely lacking.

The Oversight and Government Reform Committee exists so that it can focus on identifying ways to identify and address that waste, fraud and mismanagement. Our Committee is a unique body with a specific mandate to oversee not just one federal agency, but the entire federal government and workforce. Because of the enormity of our mission it is imperative that we have the resources needed to keep pace with this unprecedented growth in government spending.

Unfortunately, our resources have not kept pace with the growth of government, instead and when President Obama took office, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi flat-lined us.

Our Committee, led by then-Chairman Edolphus "Ed" Towns (D-NY) requested a 10.9 percent increase – it received a 3.43 percent increase.

Alternately, she increased funding for 19 other House Committee with many of them receiving more than they even requested. Others, such as Energy and Commerce, enjoyed a double-digit funding increase.

The following year, our Committee's budget was cut by 5 percent.

Now, we are expected to receive a 6.4 percent cut.

As the size and scope of the federal government has expanded dramatically, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee is continually being asked to do more with less.

Throughout this country, millions of Americans are struggling while the federal bureaucracy is over-run by waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement. Quite frankly, there couldn't be a more important time for us to be better stewards of taxpayer dollars.

The fact is we have a constitutional obligation to be vigilant in our oversight. As our mission statement says: "Americans have a right to know that the money Washington takes from them is well spent. And second, Americans deserve an efficient, effective government that works for them. Our solemn responsibility is to hold government accountable to taxpayers..."

Despite having to absorb budget cuts, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee has held 116 full committee and subcommittee hearings during the 112th Congress examining a range of issues from identifying solutions to our nation's job creation crisis to contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan. We've highlighted areas of federal agency waste while fighting for additional transparency to better monitor how taxpayer dollars are spent.

We've worked with the GAO to identify government agencies and programs included on their "high risk" and "duplicative programs" lists and overseen efforts to reduce fraud at the IRS and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.

We shined a light on the reckless gun-walking operation known as Fast and Furious. Pressing the Justice Department and Attorney General Holder for the full facts regarding this gun smuggling program that led to the death of our own Border Patrol agents.

With the federal government issuing more than \$125 billion in improper payments in FY 2010 and the bureaucracy struggling to absorb the impacts of the \$1 trillion new health care program can anyone credibly make the case that we need less, not more oversight?

The only way we can adequately fulfill our mandate for conducting aggressive and legitimate oversight is to have the resources needed to do it.

Conducting meaningful, real oversight, can lead to billions in savings for the government.

Still, other entities under the Executive and Legislative Branch are given far more resources.

Today, there are a total of 73 Inspectors General supported by 12,000 staff and with a budget of more than \$2 billion.

The work of the Inspector General community has produced more than \$44 billion in savings.

The General Accountability Office (GAO) has more than 3100 employees with a budget of \$565 million. They've made more than 2,132 recommendations to improve government operations that could save taxpayers upwards of \$45 billion.

It's clear that when we provide the resources needed for oversight, we get results.

The American people sent a loud and clear message last November delivering a new Congress with a new mandate to cut spending and conduct aggressive oversight over the federal bureaucracy.

We can fulfill that mandate by undoing what previous Congresses started and move resources away from spending and legislating and allocating it towards fulfillment of the American people's call for rigorous and credible oversight.

As I said then, I come from a manufacturing background and I believe that independent checking for failures, imperfections, and design flaws is essential to providing quality control to American consumers.

Conversely, this Committee is our way of providing the American taxpayers with quality control over their government.

Limiting our resources limits the Committee's ability to uncover the next Fast and Furious.

It hurts our ability to hold a federal bureaucracy making \$125 billion in improper payments accountable.

It suffocates our ability to examine the impacts that regulations are having on our nation's ability to create jobs.

It prevents us from being able to examine the implementation of Obamacare or track how stimulus dollars are being spent.

Cutting the resources of this Committee is sending the message to the American people that we need less oversight of this Administration, not more.

I am hopeful, that with the testimony provided today, the House Administration Committee will work with us to ensure that we have the resources necessary to continue conducting meaningful oversight over the federal government so that we can all be better stewards of taxpayer dollars.