

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2011

The Honorable Ashton Carter
Deputy Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Deputy Secretary Carter:

We write to congratulate you on your recent appointment to serve as the 31st Deputy Secretary of Defense. We are grateful for your distinguished service to our country and look forward to your leadership in the Department of Defense, especially in the area of financial management reform.

As the Chief Management Officer at the Pentagon, you are responsible for facilitating the Secretary's goal of achieving full financial auditability by 2017. We are eager to work with you in this effort as you implement the Secretary's plan to make financial management reform a priority until the Department of Defense receives and maintains unqualified financial audit opinions. In this constrained fiscal environment, the Department of Defense can no longer depend on antiquated and inadequate business systems and practices. It is imperative the Department remedy its long-standing financial management weaknesses to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse at the expense of the American taxpayer.

Congressional oversight is more important than ever to prevent spending cuts that endanger our warfighter and our national security. The current budget environment presents tough choices for our armed forces; however, we believe the Department can show real success in establishing spending priorities that will keep the faith of the American taxpayer and our men and women in uniform. We have an obligation to limit wasteful spending to get our nation's fiscal house in order, and without a clean financial audit, we are unable to assure the American taxpayers that their dollars are being spent wisely.

To that end, the Department of Defense must make informed recommendations and improved financial management systems that are capable of providing reliable information and auditable financial statements would clearly strengthen this vital capacity. As you know, the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee has tasked the Defense Financial Management and Auditability Reform Panel to examine all aspects of the Department's current financial improvement and audit readiness plan. Over the next few months, we will hold regular hearings to understand the Department's plan and track their progress. We anticipate your full support of the panel and the Department's witnesses in this effort.

Again, we look forward to working with you as you lead the Department's efforts to achieve auditability by the 2017 deadline.

Sincerely,



K. Michael Conaway
Member of Congress



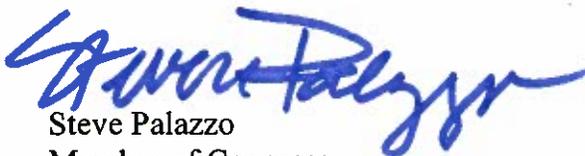
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