

OVERSIGHT OF THE U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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 - * GSA Report on Site Selection Decision re FBI HQ; submitted by Rep. Mfume.
 - * Letter, November 18, 2022, to President Biden and Administrator Carnahan from Urban League; submitted by Rep. Mfume.
- The documents listed above are available at: docs.house.gov.*

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

- * Questions for the Record: to Ms. Carnahan; submitted by Chairman Comer.
 - * Questions for the Record: to Ms. Carnahan; submitted by Rep. Gosar.
 - * Questions for the Record: to Ms. Carnahan; submitted by Rep. Connolly.
 - * Questions for the Record: to Ms. Carnahan; submitted by Rep. Krishnamoorthi.
- These documents were submitted after the hearing, and may be available upon request.*

OVERSIGHT OF THE U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. James Comer [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Comer, Jordan, Gosar, Foxx, Grothman, Palmer, Higgins, Sessions, Biggs, LaTurner, Perry, Timmons, Burchett, Luna, Edwards, Burlison, Raskin, Norton, Lynch, Connolly, Mfume, Ocasio-Cortez, Porter, Brown, Lee, Crockett, Goldman, Moskowitz, and Tlaib.

Also present: Representative Ivey.

Chairman COMER. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability will come to order. I want to welcome everyone here this morning.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JAMES COMER REPRESENTATIVE FROM KENTUCKY

Good morning, and welcome, everyone, to this hearing on the General Services Administration. GSA is intended to serve as the Federal Government's supply closet, landlord, real estate agent, motor pool, and IT support. Unfortunately, GSA has fallen short in executing its mission. Just look at the sudden announcement last week of the proposed FBI headquarters relocation. It appears that at the 11th hour, a political appointee was given the role of decisionmaker. She then changed the criteria, reversed the recommendation of career experts, then promptly left for a new job.

The process, or lack thereof, raises many questions that need to be answered. And earlier this Congress, Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Mfume held a bipartisan hearing and began an investigation into longstanding misrepresentations with *Login.gov*. Their work is ongoing, but the services *Login.gov* provides, or claims to provide, are very much relevant in our fight against identity theft, a key component in the massive amounts of fraud we saw in COVID relief programs. So, if the Biden Administration is intent on pushing *Login.gov* onto Federal agencies, we all need to have confidence in its ability to protect the interests of the American taxpayer.

GSA is facing a crisis of confidence, and it does so at a point when the Biden Administration is attempting to harden its radical policies in a number of different ways: the electrification of the Federal vehicle fleet, spreading the narrative of equity across every facet of the Federal Government, and the disjointed effort to make telework the norm in the Federal agencies. On the last point, GSA is at ground zero regarding the amount of office space the Federal Government leases and how much it actually uses. In Washington, D.C., where most Federal agency headquarters are located, much of the 21 million square feet of office space they occupy sits empty.

According to the Government Accountability Office, 17 of 24 Federal agency headquarters buildings in D.C. were operating at 25 percent or less capacity as of March. Get this: the six emptiest buildings average just nine percent capacity, and the Biden Administration does not want to know or understand whether its employees are coming into the workplace. We asked the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Director earlier this year in the same room how many D.C. area Federal employees were going to the office. Simple question. She did not know. We have since written to individual agencies to ask each of them directly. Meanwhile, GAO's building occupancy data speaks volumes. So, too, do the deserted daytime streets, reduced Metro ridership, and diminished retail activity in downtown D.C., and there are unused and underused Federal buildings strewn across the Nation.

Hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer funds are spent annually just to maintain government-owned properties that should be sold off. A billion dollars or more could be saved annually by terminating unneeded Federal office space leases—a billion dollars. Unused Federal space was an issue prior to the pandemic. Federal property management has long been on GAO's high-risk list, but it has now become one that is just simply too big and too costly to ignore.

The bottom line is this: the Biden Administration cannot have it both ways at taxpayers' expense. You either bring employees back to work to improve productivity and service or you fully right-size the office space and hand taxpayers their telework dividend, and we do not have time to wait around. Half of GSA's building leases are coming up for renewal in the next five years, so if employees are not going back to work, let us act accordingly.

When I look at the activities GSA oversees—Federal property, procurement, travel, and conferences—I see a lot of opportunities for savings in Federal discretionary spending. GSA is directly involved in how tens of billions of funds are spent every year. It is the gatekeeper to the massive Federal marketplace across a wide variety of industries. It oversees thousands of Federal properties and hundreds of millions of rented square footage. This Committee, at least my Republican colleagues, want to know that GSA is carrying out its responsibilities with the genuine interest of the taxpayer, front and center.

And we want confidence that the current Administrator is up to the task. After we received reports she was rarely in Washington, we sought information. What we found was that Administrator Carnahan did spend a great deal of her time away from D.C., more than what official travel would require. At a time when the White

House Chief of Staff, himself, is stressing the importance of in-person work, we want to know if agency heads, including Ms. Carnahan, are leading by example. So, we have a lot to talk about today. I am pleased that the GSA Administrator is here today to explore these timely and critical issues, and I look forward to her testimony.

At this time, I now yield to the Ranking Member for his opening statement.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER JAMIE RASKIN
REPRESENTATIVE FROM MARYLAND**

Mr. RASKIN. Well, thank you, Chairman Comer, and thank you, Administrator Carnahan, for rearranging your schedule to be with us at our second attempt to have this hearing. The Oversight Dems are committed to a transparent and effective Federal Government that will provide exceptional service to the American people. The GSA is in charge of the government's use and provision of real estate acquisition services and technology; it provides the services, and the products that Federal agencies need to meet their missions for the people.

Administrator Carnahan assumed her role during the COVID-19 pandemic, and under her leadership, GSA was instrumental in supporting the government's response to this crisis. From ensuring the safety of Federal buildings to procuring essential supplies and services, GSA was crucial to maintaining the continuity of government. With the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the Inflation Reduction Act, Democrats have led the way to fund GSA and make the government a leader in addressing the challenges of the new century. Administrator Carnahan has delivered transformative action on these priorities.

GSA has been at the forefront of integrating innovation into government, reducing costs, and building a more resilient workforce. It is preparing the Federal Government for the future of work with its Workplace 2030 Initiative, using Federal purchasing power to support small businesses in middle class jobs and confronting the climate crisis by reducing Federal greenhouse gas emissions, investing in sustainability, and shifting to an electric vehicle fleet. GSA is also improving access to government services for all Americans. It is drawing lessons learned from the pandemic to better assess the government's real property needs and helping Federal agencies reduce their footprint, prudent actions that can save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

While GSA has devoted significant resources to help Federal agencies assess their space needs, both in the short and long term, Congress has diverted billions of dollars away from GSA's investments in Federal buildings, gravely undermining its ability to reduce the Federal real estate footprint. The result has already been an increase in cost as aging and dilapidated buildings grow more and more expensive to repair. I look forward to hearing more from the Administrator today about the true costs of underfunding the GSA and how we can achieve substantial cost savings by taking advantage of reduced real estate prices, high vacancy rates across America, and the advent of telework.

While Democrats are working with GSA on improving government services to the people, extreme MAGA Republicans spent weeks embroiled in ridiculous internal partisan combat and Machiavellian games. This hearing was originally scheduled for October 19, but our good Chairman had to cancel it the night before. He may have been concerned that holding a hearing to criticize the operations of the Federal Government on day 16 without a Speaker of the House, a vivid demonstration of the GOP's inability to handle even its own internal operations, would not make for a very convincing show.

So now we are facing yet another government shutdown in a matter of days. This emerges again from the GOP Majority's self-described chaos and division and clown show. The juvenile antics and ideological extremism of the GOP conference left the House unable to perform its most basic duties, including giving this Agency the funding it needs to do its work. If my colleagues are truly concerned about the importance of ensuring effective government for the American people, they must start by getting their own act together in the House of Representatives.

With that, I look forward to hearing testimony this morning from Administrator Carnahan on the GSA's important work, and thank you kindly, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. I am pleased to introduce our witness today, the Honorable Administrator Robin Carnahan. Administrator Carnahan was confirmed by the Senate into her current role leading GSA on June 23, 2021. She oversees activities of over 11,000 GSA employees and critical services for Federal Government agencies, ranging from acquisition solutions to management of public and leased buildings. Prior to her appointment as Administrator, she led the Senate and local government practice at 18F, an organization within GSA with a mission of assisting government agencies with technology solutions. Administrator Carnahan also served the State of Missouri as Secretary of State from 2005 to 2013.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 9(g), Administrator Carnahan, will you please stand and raise your right hand?

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I do.

Chairman COMER. Let the record show the witness answered in the affirmative. We certainly appreciate you being here today and look forward to your testimony.

I now recognize Administrator Carnahan to please begin her opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROBIN CARNAHAN
ADMINISTRATOR
U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, good morning. Thank you, Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Raskin, and Members of the Committee. My name is Robin Carnahan. I am the Administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration.

Making government work better for the people we serve and saving money while we do it is our North Star. That is why we are

focused on three priorities. The first is optimizing and modernizing the Federal Government's real estate footprint, the second is making it easier, faster, and cheaper for agencies to buy goods and services, and the third is delivering simple, secure, and accessible digital services for the public. My written testimony goes into greater detail about how we are working to achieve these goals, but today, I just want to highlight some of the opportunities and the challenges we are seeing at this very unique moment to deliver better value for the people we serve and save money for taxpayers. I know this Committee shares those goals, and I would like to focus on ways that we can partner together to get this done.

First, GSA is laser focused on rightsizing the Federal footprint. Right now, agencies across the government are rethinking how much space they actually need, and while GSA does not make space decisions for agencies, we do work closely with them to leverage our team's expertise to help agencies plan and, whenever possible, to downsize. GSA has a great track record of success in doing this. Since 2013, we have helped reduce the Federal footprint by disposing of 12 million square feet of owned space and giving up 18 million square feet of leased space. We want to build on that record by continuing to consolidate and dispose of unneeded property and leases, and, in fact, we see an opportunity to reduce the government's footprint by up to 30 percent. That would save \$60 billion over ten years.

Just last week, we announced 23 properties to get this started to dispose of. This represents a potential of 3.5 million square feet of reduced space and cost avoidance. It is not even counting what we get in the value of the sale, cost avoidance of \$1 billion over the next ten years. This is just a start. We need your help to do even more. So, what is that? What do we need?

First, GSA needs congressional support for our full Fiscal Year 2024 budget request and for key legislative reforms to speed up the process. Consolidating agencies and disposing of buildings can only happen if we have modern functional space for agencies to relocate into. The good news is that Congress thought about that and came up with the plan many years ago to do just that when it established the Federal Buildings Fund in order to use agency rent payments to maintain buildings. The bad news is that for the last 12 years, on average, roughly a billion dollars from that fund has been used for other agencies.

As GAO noted in their September report, the largest impediment to improving Federal Building utilization is lack of funding. Bottom line, we have missed opportunities to shrink our real estate portfolio because we have not had the upfront money to reconfigure and modernize facilities that we plan to keep, even though we know that those investments will pay back many times over through lower real estate costs. This is an important moment for the American people to reap billions of dollars into future savings, but it can only happen if we work together. That is why we are asking Congress for a scoring fix for the Federal Buildings Fund to ensure that the rent that we collect is reinvested in our public buildings and saving taxpayer money.

Now, GSA also works to make it easier, faster, and cheaper for our agency partners to buy the goods and services they need. While

purchasing decisions, as you know, are ultimately up to the agencies themselves, those that buy through GSA get the benefit of knowing they are getting good value and satisfying procurement rules. Last year alone, GSA helped agencies save \$6 billion by leveraging government's buying power to get better prices. Our Fiscal Year 2024 budget requests also includes several proposals to improve the acquisition process. They are commonsense proposals, and we look forward to working with you on those.

Additionally, GSA helps agencies deliver better digital experience for the public. The fact is there are a lot of common challenges that agencies face when it comes to technology, so building shared technology services, the smart way to address those challenges—that is why GSA offers things like FedRAMP and *Login.gov*, and U.S. Web Design System, and we are continuously expanding and improving those products to meet agency needs. And that includes things like a National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Identity Assurance Level 2 (IAL2) compliant identity verification option for agencies through *Login.gov* that will start next year, and launching a new text messaging notification system that could save thousands of hours and millions of dollars for agencies and the public. I also appreciate the Committee's support for extending the Tech Modernization Fund. It is one of the smartest investments we can make in government, and I want to work with you all to get that done.

Finally, as you may know, last week GSA concluded its congressionally directed site selection process for the FBI's new headquarters campus. GSA determined that the site in Greenbelt, Maryland to be the best for the FBI, the government, because the site was lowest cost to taxpayers, provided the greatest access to transportation for employees and visitors, gave the government the most certainty on project schedule, and also provided the potential to advance sustainability and equity. I would encourage all of you to review the materials we have posted online. It includes our decision-making official's full 40-page decision document and her analysis that led to the final decision.

We have always said from the beginning that we are committed to a fair and transparent process. We mean that, and we have put all of our documents online. I am proud of the process that we ran. I stand behind the decision of our team and of all the public servants who carefully followed that process and selected the site most advantageous to the government. I know it is a topic of great interest to the Committee. I would be happy to discuss it further, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for your willingness to partner with GSA to make our government work better for the people we serve, and to save money doing it.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. We will now begin our question portion of the hearing, and I will begin.

GAO recently found that 17 of 24 major Federal agency headquarter buildings in the D.C. area are at less than 25 percent occupancy with some less than ten percent full. GSA's own headquarters was only 11 percent occupancy despite being the government's primary real estate agent and property manager. GAO notes that the Federal Government owns 511 million square feet of office space and leases another 180 million square feet from the private

sector for use by Federal agencies. That is almost 700 million square feet total of office space available to the Federal Government, and the cost of maintaining and operating out of that space is ridiculously high. Administrator Carnahan, how much does it cost to operate and maintain office space used by Federal agencies across the government? Is the cost in the billions?

Ms. CARNAHAN. What I can speak to, Congressman, is the Federal Buildings Fund, which I referred to in my statement, and that is the fund that lease payments by government agencies pay.

Chairman COMER. So it is in the billions, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. Yes.

Chairman COMER. So according to GSA data from the Fiscal Year 2022 Federal Real Property Profile, the total annual cost of buildings owned, leased, or otherwise managed by the Federal Government is over \$25 billion. Federal agencies spend \$2 billion annually to operate and maintain Federal office buildings and \$5 billion on rental lease payments. Administrator, I think you agree with me that a huge portion of Federal office space sits empty or underutilized. If we could just reduce the amount of office space leased by ten percent, we would save roughly half a billion dollars on lease payments annually, correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I could not agree with you more that we have a huge opportunity to optimize our footprint and are eager to work with you to get that done.

Chairman COMER. Well, Administrator, the Federal Government owns properties all over the Nation that are underutilized. Many of these properties could be put to more productive use, helping local economies. Selling these properties could yield billions in sales proceeds and save hundreds of millions of dollars every year in operation and maintenance costs, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is true.

Chairman COMER. In fact, the GSA data in Fiscal Year 2022 said the limited disposal activity that occurred still netted \$36 million in sales proceeds and \$22 million in averted operations and maintenance costs. Administrator, given that the Federal workers are teleworking to such a high degree, and given how empty our Federal office buildings are, I assume GSA is working to downsize the Federal Government's office space footprint to realize these cost savings. So, what is the holdup?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I am glad you asked that question. This is a topic of great interest to me, and I think we are fully aligned on what needs to happen. We need to optimize, which means shrink and consolidate whenever we can to make sure our buildings are both useful for communities where they sit, but also save money for taxpayers.

Chairman COMER. Are the Federal agencies reluctant to give up office space?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, Congressman, I would love to talk a little bit about what we are doing right now, if you give me a minute to begin the disposal process. Last week, we announced 23 properties and facilities across the country that we intend to begin the disposal process on. That will be 3.5 million square feet of reduction, and get this: it is a billion dollars in cost avoidance and deferred maintenance and other things, not even counting the value that we

will get with the sales. So, this is just the beginning, and we want to do more than that.

Chairman COMER. Is President Biden on board with this? Is he pushing agencies to actually surrender space that they are not using?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, we are working closely with the folks at Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on all of this, and we are working with agencies across the government to figure out what their space in this actually are.

Chairman COMER. You know, the American people are fed up with the wasteful spending, and it is not just Federal empty office space costing billions every year. A nonprofit transparency group recently found that Federal agencies spent \$3.3 billion on furniture over the past few years apparently to furnish office spaces left mostly empty under maximum telework. Some agencies spent hundreds of thousand dollars just on updating empty conference rooms. Administrator, can you explain why the purchasing of Federal furniture continued unabated during the pandemic?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I cannot speak to specific items that were purchased, but I can say that the government did not close down. Agencies were continuing to work, courthouses continued to operate, prisons were operating, the Defense Department was operating, lots of agencies were in offices. I personally visited Des Moines where throughout the pandemic they were constructing a courthouse. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, San Antonio, Texas, this work did not stop.

Chairman COMER. My time is about to expire, but let me conclude by saying agencies that truly require new furniture can give their old furniture to other agencies or sell it off to private parties. That would take some of the burden off taxpayers. Now, I cannot imagine a big private business spending lavishly on furnishings for an office building that no one works out of. Shareholders would not stand for it, and we cannot stand for it on behalf of the American taxpayer. There needs to be a culture shift in the Federal Government that looks toward cost savings and achieving agency missions in the most efficient ways possible, and I hope GSA hears that message loud and clear. I now yield to the Ranking Member for his questions.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, and I am going to call on Congresswoman Norton to go first. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Go ahead, Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. GSA is responsible for the efficient and effective functioning of our government. When its budget is slashed, the consequences are far reaching and, more often than not, counterproductive. In fact, funding cuts to GSA translate to increased expenses for the American people, such as those caused by deferred maintenance of Federal property. Administrator Carnahan, in Fiscal Year 2023, eight of the 17 major repairs and alterations projects that GSA requested in the President's budget were resubmissions because the projects did not receive funding when they were originally requested. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Correct.

Ms. NORTON. And in fiscal 2024, 13 out of the 17 projects were resubmissions. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. NORTON. Administrator Carnahan, is it correct that the cost of resubmitted projects increased by \$300 million due to the delays caused by Congress' failure to fund them?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I think that would be the low end, yes.

Ms. NORTON. House Republicans' Fiscal Year 2024 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, which funds GSA, would cut \$715 million from the Federal Buildings Fund. This is \$1.6 billion below the Administration's request for the Fund. Administrator Carnahan, how does this lack of funding lead to waste and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, thank you for that question. I refer to my statement to the Federal Buildings Fund and how crucial that was for our ability to consolidate, sell buildings, and save money. If you think about in your own life, if you are a business and have two locations and decide it is time to shrink into one, you usually need a little bit of money to maybe upgrade and modernize or change and reconfigure the one building that you are going to bring everybody into. That is exactly what we are talking about here. You cannot get rid of the old building that you know is going to save you a lot of money if there is not a way to, upfront, have money to invest in the improvement of the one you are going to keep.

And if you think about that, across our portfolio it is happening over and over again. The single biggest impediment, as the GAO said, to downsizing and consolidating and saving billions of dollars for taxpayers is access to upfront money that Congress intends to come from the Federal Buildings Fund. Congress solved this problem, and it worked for decades. And it has only been over the past 12 years that over a billion dollars a year has been siphoned off to use for other things. We are asking for that money to be able to then have long-term planning to do what Chairman Comer and I totally agree needs to happen, which is optimize our footprint.

Ms. NORTON. The Republicans' bill also fails to include any new funding for the Technology Modernization Fund, which is critical to improving and securing Federal IT systems. Administrator Carnahan, when Democrats' American Rescue Plan provided \$1 billion to the Technology Modernization Fund, is it true that Federal agencies submitted proposals requesting more than \$3.5 billion in support for the technology modernization projects?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. It has turned out to be one of the smartest investments Congress could make in modernizing technology, and it has been very popular among agencies because it is a way to get money faster. Given that technology changes so quickly, the speed of need is that they be able to get access to money, and TMF helps with that.

Ms. NORTON. What will happen to these projects if Republicans succeed in barring funding to the Technology Modernization Fund in Fiscal Year 2024?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I think the primary issue will be just delay. We are living in a world where technology changes weekly, if not faster, and the only way the Federal Government can keep up is by having access to funding to respond at the speed of need. The TMF does that, and if there is a decision made to stop funding it, it will

go back to the two or three or four or five years that it sometimes takes to get funding for technology.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. My time has expired.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady's time has expired. They have called votes, so we are going to ask two more questions on each side, have two more questioners on each side. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Higgins from Louisiana.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Administrator Carnahan, thank you for being here today. I am going to touch on a couple of things, be moving fast. Regarding the FBI, many of my colleagues in the House and Senate, myself included, have expressed serious concerns regarding the weaponization of the FBI, and yet it is on the slates moving forward to give them a brand new building. I am going to oppose that with every fiber of my being. In fact, I think the FBI as an institution should be taken down brick by brick by oppressive brick and rebuilt from the ground up, literally.

Well, we are going to focus on GSA's interaction there. It has been widely reported that the FBI and many Virginia officials have voiced concerns regarding conflict of interest during the selection and the process of relocation of the building. On October the 12 of this year, Director Wray, whom I oppose and think should be removed or resign, sent a letter to you raising concerns about conflicts of interest by Nina Albert, a senior political appointee at GSA, regarding the selection of the "Greenbelt parcel of land," which was owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which was the senior official's immediate prior employer, Ms. Nina Albert. Nina Albert has now been hired as a deputy mayor of the District of Columbia's Planning and Economic Development. Administrator, have you conducted a review of these allegations, and if so, what are your findings, ma'am?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Thanks for your question, sir. We have conducted a review. When I received the letter from Director Wray raising concerns about both the process and the site selection authority that you mentioned, I referred it to our legal counsel to dig into whether there was any merit to any of the—

Mr. HIGGINS. Does the legal counsel work for you, Administrator?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, sir. That is the legal counsel that I rely on. So, I sent that to our legal counsel, had them review the process, review Ms. Albert's participation, and they found no merit in any of that. I will tell you that we have fully vetted Ms. Albert because we knew of her prior employment at WMATA, the Washington Area Metro Transit Authority. As you know—

Mr. HIGGINS. You said you found no merit. Not to interrupt, just following what you stated here, you said you found no merit. Do the facts not match up with what was reported?

Ms. CARNAHAN. The suggestion that there was a conflict or a potential conflict is what I was referring to. This is an issue that we were aware of her former employer at the time she was hired as the top public building official and real estate expert at GSA. We knew that the FBI was going to be relocating to one of the three sites that Congress directed us to make a decision about. We asked our legal counsel at that time to make sure that that was fully vetted and fine.

Mr. HIGGINS. When you say, "legal counsel," is that one attorney or is that a team of attorneys, and is that public? Is this an attorney that the Committee can question because we would certainly be interested in questioning the attorney that came to the conclusion that there was no issues with the situation that I have described. You apparently have accepted, that okay, well, the attorney said there is no issue, so there is no issue, but the Oversight Committee is not going to readily accept that conclusion. So, please clarify your position there for our future reference on this Committee. Do you accept it? You said you referred it to legal counsel. You referred to one legal counsel. Can you describe that? Is that an office? Have they given you an official report? Can we review that official report? Are you going to stand upon that when we call you again next year and have that counselor in front of us?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. Sorry. I did not understand your question, but, yes, we have hundreds of pages that we have posted online about all of the decision-making process, and that includes the review of our legal counsel, so you can view our website.

Mr. HIGGINS. And in my remaining 30 seconds, I am trying to drill down here on what you are referring to as your legal counsel. Describe what that is to America.

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, there is an Office of the General Counsel at GSA that has several hundred attorneys in it. I am not sure how many were involved in the review of this, but the reference that I am making was signed by the general counsel of GSA.

Mr. HIGGINS. Okay. So, suffice it to say that a team of attorneys employed by GSA have determined that there was no nefarious intent in the situation that I described regarding the location of the proposed new FBI building?

Ms. CARNAHAN. The legal counsel of GSA, the general counsel, looked into the questions that were raised by Director Wray and found that they did not have merit.

Mr. HIGGINS. Very well. My time has expired, Mr. Chairman, but I strongly advise that this Committee takes further action to look into this now that the GSA's legal counsel has taken a position. I yield.

Chairman COMER. We will do that. Thank you, Mr. Higgins. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Lynch from Massachusetts.

Mr. LYNCH. So, just following up on that. Ms. Carnahan, so Director Wray brought the question forward—is that right—to have legal counsel look at that, the potential of that transaction?

Ms. CARNAHAN. No, sir. Director Wray sent a letter that listed a few concerns that the FBI apparently had—

Mr. LYNCH. But I said he raised the concern. You are saying he sent a letter raising the concern. Do we have a difference of opinion here?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Sorry. Repeat your question, please.

Mr. LYNCH. Director Wray brought forward the question about the bidding process regarding the new headquarters.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Director Wray sent a letter that listed some concerns that they had with the process that we used to make the site selection, yes.

Mr. LYNCH. "Yes" would have been good. Yes, that is exactly what I was asking you. So, he was not trying to hide something. He was trying to get an answer on some questions, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. LYNCH. Yes, okay. I know that GSA and the Federal Government hold troves of sensitive data, from Social Security Numbers to classified national security information, and so our cybersecurity posture is extremely important in protecting all that information. Congress in the American Rescue Plan appropriated an additional \$1 billion for the Technology Modernization Fund that you spoke about earlier. And we do hear complaints from agencies about the speed at which that money is deployed for modernization of some of the legacy technology that is out there and that poses a vulnerability. Can you give us an update on how that money has been deployed? If there is any delay there, or is it just because of the number of requests across agencies?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, thanks for the question. The Technology Modernization Fund I truly think is one of the smartest things that has ever been passed by Congress. It is. We need to have modern technology to serve the American people, and we need to have folks who understand technology help make decisions about how that money is spent. So, when I arrived, the team that was running the TMF was pretty small, and that did not involve and include a lot of seasoned technologists. We have built up that team. We brought people in from the private sector to help run that operation, and it is completely transformed. The amount of projects that have gone through are much, much higher speed. There have been 47 projects that have gone through with \$770 million that have passed through and been committed, so I am really proud of the work that team has done.

Mr. LYNCH. Okay. Sounds like that when we got off the ground, that was a little delay because of the small number of people that were administering that. Do you have any examples of projects that are areas in which that funding has been deployed?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I do. While it has not, sort of, formally divided up into buckets, that is mainly focused on cybersecurity, and a thing called Zero Trust has been one of the primary areas of focus, and that, of course, is something that all agencies need, also shared services. And what I mean by that are, if you think about how government interacts with people, it is very similar, whichever agency you are dealing with, right? It can be, you know, identity, it can be logging in, it can be transferring money.

So, we do shared services, and that is a thing that can save a lot of money and provide better service, and then we do citizen-facing services there. And so, for example, a lot has been done with the VA and the Department of Agriculture in ways that help veterans be able to access benefits quicker and help farmers be able to apply for loans and get things done quicker. We are doing a lot with National Archives at the moment. We have also helped Homeland Security, but it is agencies across the government. In fact, now every single Cabinet agency has, I believe, done some work with TMF.

Mr. LYNCH. Great. There is a keen concern about Department of Health and Human Services and the sensitivity of Americans'

health information. Has any resources been dedicated to solving that vulnerability?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, protecting folks' personal information is a high priority. I can look into and get back to you about what projects we have worked on with HHS.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. I appreciate that. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. Pursuant to the previous order, the Chair declares the Committee in recess, subject to the call of the Chair. We will plan to reconvene 10 minutes after votes.

The Committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Chairman COMER. The Committee will come to order.

The Chair now recognizes Dr. Foxx from North Carolina for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Carnahan, in the post-pandemic era, many businesses in the private sector are downsizing office space since so many employees are working remotely or adopting hybrid schedules. It has been reported that about 52 percent of companies are planning to reduce their office space over the next three years. These same changes are also affecting the Federal Government. As I am sure you are aware, the Government Accountability Office noted that 17 of 24 major Federal agencies' headquarters in D.C. are less than 25 percent occupied. How much does GSA spend annually to maintain and operate office space for Federal agencies?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Thanks for that question, Congresswoman. We talked about this a little bit in the first session. We have a Federal Buildings Fund where agencies that have space in buildings or have leased space pay rent effectively.

Ms. FOXX. Right.

Ms. CARNAHAN. And so that amount every year is around more or less \$11 billion.

Ms. FOXX. Eleven billion dollars. Okay.

Ms. CARNAHAN. And that is just rental payments.

Ms. FOXX. Rental.

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is different than your question, which was about how much we spend.

Ms. FOXX. To maintain.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Right. So, what happens is that Federal Buildings Fund actually is shorted every year in what we are allowed to spend. So, typically what will happen, about half of our portfolio is leased and half is owned. And so, for the leased portion, that rent just immediately goes out the door and pays the owner of the building, right, in whatever the community the building is in, and the other half is meant to go back into maintenance of the buildings.

Ms. FOXX. Okay.

Ms. CARNAHAN. What has happened over the last 12 years is that portion has been basically siphoned off to pay for other things.

Ms. FOXX. Okay.

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, that is why we have not been able to reinvest in buildings as much as people are paying rent.

Ms. FOXX. Okay. That is not my issue. If 70 percent of a major Federal agency headquarters are only 25 percent occupied, I believe we can find substantial savings by downsizing office space. Would you agree?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Absolutely.

Ms. FOXX. All right. With potentially billions of dollars wasted each year on underused assets, what is GSA doing to save taxpayers money?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. Thanks for that question. We take this very seriously. I could not agree with you more that we have an opportunity to really save billions of dollars for taxpayers. So, what we do—

Ms. FOXX. Okay. So let me follow up. So how are you determining when it is necessary to downsize office space?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, our team has done a portfolio-wide review, national portfolio review to figure out which buildings we should keep and which buildings we should dispose of. I think that this is a huge first step. We announced last week already that 23 of those are going to be put up through the disposal process. Just those 23 buildings is a reduction of 3.5 million square feet of space and a potential and cost avoidance. And again, this is not even talking about the value when we sell it, of for over a billion dollars, so we are eager to work with you all to get this done.

Ms. FOXX. Ordinary Americans, small businesses, and corporate America cannot afford to pay for space they barely use, let alone help the Federal Government pay for its unused space. So how quickly is GSA going to push agencies to consolidate office space based on the study you just mentioned?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, we are working with agencies all the time as they are rethinking how much space they need, and so that is an important thing that the team does every day. In the end, by the way, we do not force them to make a decision. They have to decide based on their mission, how much space they need. We try to give them alternatives. You know, one of the things that we are seeing nowadays is when people are in offices, they want to work a little bit differently, right? There is collaboration space, there are meeting rooms, there are other kinds of configurations rather than individual offices that make more sense, and so we are really working with the agencies on that.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you. I have one more question I want to squeeze in. If D.C.-based Federal employees, including yourself, choose to telework a majority of the time from lower-cost areas in the country, should they continue to receive the additional 32.49 percent locality pay increase for the D.C. area?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, the issue of locality pay is something that our H.R. department thinks about all the time to make sure that the taxpayers are getting the value, and that people are getting what they—

Ms. FOXX. So how much would taxpayers save if teleworking employees were paid the wage that corresponds with their actual location of work?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I think that is a question I will have to ask for OPM because I think they are better suited to be able to answer that.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we need to pursue these issues that have been brought forth by Ms. Carnahan and see what Congress can do to force these agencies to downsize and save taxpayers money.

Chairman COMER. Absolutely, we will. That is the mission statement of this Committee and look forward to working with you, Dr. Foxx, on that. Now the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Connolly, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is great to hear, Ms. Carnahan, that you do not force agencies. So, you act as sort of the procurer of space, whether rented or purchased on behalf of Federal agencies. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So Federal agencies are tantamount to being your client?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, sir. We collaborate with them. Correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right, and you try to make happy clients, presumably?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, we work on that very hard. I would——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would it be fair to say that the FBI is not a happy client right now?

Ms. CARNAHAN. We will see how happy or unhappy they are, but, yes, I have received letters from the director that indicate he is unsatisfied with the——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right. Let us stipulate you have got an unhappy client right now, and let us probe why. So, revisions were made to criteria that had been established in July of this year. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And what happened was you changed the weighting of those criteria, which, I will editorialize, certainly seem to favor one party over another, but you changed the weighting. That is correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I am——

Mr. CONNOLLY. That is pretty simple. You changed the weighting that existed previously to something different in July?

Ms. CARNAHAN. We did, and I——

Mr. CONNOLLY. And at that time, you replaced a career civil servant who was overseeing the expert panel of three with a political appointee. This Nina Albert. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. We replaced someone with the top real estate professional at the——

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes, let us not editorialize. She is a political appointee. She was. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is correct, and the top of real estate——

Mr. CONNOLLY. And is she still at GSA?

Ms. CARNAHAN. She is no longer at GSA.

Mr. CONNOLLY. So right after she did the overturn of the panel of expert witnesses that unanimously chose a different site, the one in Springfield, Virginia, she left the Agency. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. She is now the deputy mayor in Washington, D.C.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I know what she is. She left the Agency was my question.

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is correct. She is now deputy mayor.

Mr. CONNOLLY. That is right. So, in this process, did GSA diminish the weighting of proximity and FBI mission category from 35 to 25 percent?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I do not have all of those numbers in front of me, but there was—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Let us stipulate the answer is yes.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Okay.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And by the way, you changed the name to make it maybe less favorable to the FBI, from FBI mission as a category to proximity. Did at that same time, GSA diminished the weighting of the transportation category from 25 to 20 percent?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I do not have, as I said—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Let us stipulate the answer is yes.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Okay. All right. All right.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Did GSA increase the weighting of equity and cost categories from 25 percent to 40 percent?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, your question is to—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Another category.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Two categories. There is—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Cost and equity.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Cost is a category, equity is a category, and those I know were both increased.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Big change. Okay. So, even with this weighted change that clearly favored one party over another, the three panel of experts, two from GSA, one from the FBI, unanimously nonetheless chose a different side. Is that not correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And your appointee, this Ms. Nina Albert, who is no longer with the Agency and parachuted in, unilaterally overturned and redirected the evaluation of these new weighted criteria that the three expert panel had reviewed and evaluated. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I would like to just clarify one thing that you said and that you use the word “overturned.”

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, it looks like she overturned it to me. I read the report. A lot of personal pronouns in there, by the way, “I,” “I,” “I.” And it seems that, irrespective of the professional judgment, with the change to the criteria that clearly favored one side over another, nonetheless, the Virginia site was unanimously selected. And because of her, I will say, in my opinion, arbitrary overturn of their findings, you ended up picking one side over the other, and that raises serious questions about the process.

Now in the end of your testimony today, you have a full-throated reaffirmation of your faith in that decision and that individual in making that decision. And I would just say to you I think you really risk damaging the credibility of the Agency and its sense of fairness and lack of political interference in decision-making. I think there is a lot at risk here. And, Mr. Chairman, we are going to be asking for an Inspector General’s report, and I hope you could join me in that effort to look at this process and how it can be so contaminated as to skew the ultimate decision. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back, and let me say I share Mr. Connolly’s concerns about the way GSA chose the new

FBI headquarter site. The decision implicates hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer dollars and economic impact for the surrounding community, yet GSA altered the original selection criteria to reduce the weight given to the site's ability to enhance FBI's mission effectiveness. The decision-making process itself was altered. GSA installed a political appointee who overruled the decision of a panel of career officials originally charged with making the selection. She then promptly left the Agency, just does not seem right.

It is now clear to me why these major changes were made in the 11th hour. So, I invite the gentleman from Virginia and anyone else on the Committee with concerns about the process to join me in following up on today's hearing with a request to the GSA Inspector General to review GSA's actions in this matter.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I would gladly join with you in signing such a request, and I also want to just add to the point you made, if I may. In making this decision, ironically, the Springfield site is already owned by the Federal Government and would not cost any procurement money. The Greenbelt site is owned by Metro, as you pointed out, I think in your opening statement, and will have to be purchased by the government.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. Very good. Look forward to working with you. You have more knowledge of this issue than anyone. I think this will be a good bipartisan issue for the Committee. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Jordan from Ohio for 5 minutes.

Mr. JORDAN. Ms. Carnahan, was Director Wray wrong when he said that he did not agree with the process that was followed in selecting the site in Maryland?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I asked my general counsel to look into all of the concerns that were raised in Director Wray's letter, and they found those to be without merit.

Mr. JORDAN. He says, "We have concerns about fairness and transparency in the process and GSA is fair to adhere to its own site selection plan." So, he did not just say there were problems, you did not follow your own rules, and you say that is not true?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Our general counsel found that we did follow all of the rules.

Mr. JORDAN. What do you say? You are the boss.

Ms. CARNAHAN. I agree that we followed all of the rules.

Mr. JORDAN. So, Senator Kaine is wrong as well when he says, "irrevocably undermined and tainted, and this decision must be reversed." He is wrong as well?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Look, there are a lot of people who are interested in where this site goes. We ran the most fair and transparent—

Mr. JORDAN. Well, I am interested, too. I do not want to go to either place. I do not think we should be rewarding the FBI, the same FBI that said pro-life Catholics were extremists, the same FBI that retaliated against whistleblowers, the same FBI that censored Americans. That is not Jim Jordan. We know this. We have seen the main perspective about what happened at the Richmond FBI. We have had whistleblower testimony in front of Congress telling about how they have been retaliated against, and we know they censored Americans. The Fifth Circuit told us that. So, I do not want it to go to either place. Frankly, if it goes anywhere,

it should go to Huntsville, where they already got all kinds of all kinds of land, all kinds of space, and all kinds of operations, but I am concerned about this process.

How long did Ms. Albert have the position where she could overrule the three-person panel? How long was she in that position?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, Ms. Albert was the head of the Public Building Service for GSA. She was in that position for, I think, two years. We made the decision—

Mr. JORDAN. How long has she been at GSA?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I believe she started in July 2019. Sorry, 2021.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay. So, she was there a couple of years?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Uh-huh.

Mr. JORDAN. That she recently left?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Correct.

Mr. JORDAN. And she left before the decision was made public. Is that right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Correct.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay. So, you say that Senator Kaine is wrong in his assessment and Director Wray is wrong in his assessment as well?

Ms. CARNAHAN. We ran a fair and transparent process, Congressman. That was my directive to our team. We did that in the extreme. Every document that we have used to make any of these decisions is available online. I would encourage you to look at those.

Mr. JORDAN. And correct me, maybe I am wrong, but did not a three-person panel look at all of this and they made a decision, and then that was overruled by Ms. Albert, who had been at GSA for all of two years and then she left. After she overruled, she left before you guys make the decision public. Isn't that how it played out?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I want to just focus on a term that you are using, and that is "overruled." The normal process for GSA when it makes site selections is to have a panel that makes some recommendations. They look at a lot of things and they recommend, but we then have the senior real estate professional at the Agency make an ultimate decision. In fact, sometimes those decisions are different. The interesting thing is—

Mr. JORDAN. How often have they have been different?

Ms. CARNAHAN. The most interesting thing is in this case—

Mr. JORDAN. How many times has this happened where the panel suggests one thing, recommends one thing, and then one individual who is in this position that Ms. Albert had comes in and overrules? How often does that happen?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, let me tell you the most relevant time that—

Mr. JORDAN. No, no, that is not what I asked. I asked how often has it happened.

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I will have to get back to you on that number, but there is a very relevant situation.

Mr. JORDAN. Is it rare? Is it often? Is it all the time? Can you give me that?

Ms. CARNAHAN. In this particular project, it happened because in 2014, when all sites were looked at originally, there was a panel. It down-selected dozens of sites to three.

Mr. JORDAN. Uh-huh.

Ms. CARNAHAN. All three were in Maryland.

Mr. JORDAN. Okay.

Ms. CARNAHAN. The site selection authority over that, the equivalent of Ms. Albert decided that was not right and picked two in Maryland and one in Virginia, the site in Springfield. So, in this project, there is a history—

Mr. JORDAN. That still begs the question I am asking. So, you have had it happened twice in the same project. How often does it happen anywhere else? That is an important answer for us to have. And when we are evaluating how you did this, particularly in light of what the Chairman and Mr. Connolly just said, and I assume the Ranking Member agrees with this, too, there is going to be an Inspector General investigation on all this. So, we would kind of like to know that answer.

Ms. CARNAHAN. We will—

Mr. JORDAN. It is a pretty important factor if it only has happened twice and it happened on the same issue, this FBI headquarters, which many of us on this side do not want going to either Maryland or Virginia, frankly, in light of what the FBI has been up to regarding the American people, that is pretty important. And I agree with the Chairman. I think an Inspector General investigation is exactly what is needed to get to the bottom of this. And if we find out this hardly ever happens, but happened twice with the FBI headquarters, holy cow, that, I think, tells us something in and of itself. I know my time has expired. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Thank you, gentleman. The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member for 5 minutes.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, we have seen some very strange, indeed bizarre bedfellows jumping in together in this cause. We get some people who started out by saying they want to dismantle the FBI, brick by brick and destroy the Agency. Our distinguished colleague, Mr. Jordan, seems to have made a career of trying to disassemble the FBI. He wants to the FBI headquarters in Huntsville, Alabama, apparently. And then we have got some disappointed applicants from Virginia who are trying to attack the whole administrative process by which they were entered into it in the first place back in 2014, as Ms. Carnahan just explained.

So why don't we try to get back to the law here and what the administrative process really is because the administrative process came up with a very clear result that the Greenbelt site that was chosen by the site selection authority has the lowest overall cost to taxpayers, number one. Number two, the Greenbelt site is the most transit accessible site due to its short walking distance to the metro and commuter rail. It offers the greatest opportunity for the government's investment to positively affect the Washington region through sustainable and equitable development and so on. There are five criteria set forth, and the site selection authority chose the Greenbelt site.

Now, my friend, Mr. Jordan and Mr. Connolly, pounced on the deliberations of the panel, so what we need to look at is, well, what is the relationship between the panel and the site selection authority. Now, if I understand you correctly, Administrator Carnahan,

back in 2014, the panel then unanimously advanced three sites, all of which were in Maryland, but the site selection authority overruled the panel in their language. Of course, it is not an overruling because it was not a decision in the first place. It is just a recommendation.

But the site selection authority said thank you for your advice, I am going to add one more candidate from Virginia, which is the Springfield site, and then we are going to advance that to have all three looked at. Then the panel comes back and says, well, we happen to like the Springfield site, but the site selection authority which is charged with your decision-making power over this exclusively, and everybody agrees that is what the process is, says, no, the Greenbelt site is the one that conforms to these five criteria.

Now, we have got to have some way of making these decisions. Otherwise, the Congress of the United States is going to be involved in every occasion in which you are making a decision about where to place a Federal agency or department. How often does this process take place with a panel and a site selection authority? Is that a rare occasion, or does that happen frequently?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, thanks for that explanation, Congressman. Most sites selections are not of this great of interest, frankly, to Congress.

Mr. RASKIN. It is a headquarters, right.

Ms. CARNAHAN. It is a headquarters. So, for a headquarters like this, this is a very normal process where there is a panel of some type that makes recommendations and an ultimate decider who is the site selection authority.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes. And then sometimes, the site selection authority agrees with the panel. Sometimes it disagrees with it. It disagreed when Springfield, Virginia was put into the competition, and then the site selection authority disagreed with it again when it decided that Greenbelt was the way to go.

Well, what about this idea that there is somehow some kind of conflict of interest in the site selection authority because the site selection authority worked for WMATA, which is an agency that serves Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C., or that there is some kind of conflict of interest because the site selection authority has a career in government and became the deputy mayor, not of Greenbelt, Maryland, but of the District of Columbia. Do you see a conflict of interest there?

Ms. CARNAHAN. No, sir, and we fully vetted Ms. Albert's relationship with WMATA when she joined GSA, and subsequent to the FBI Director bringing up concerns, we had legal counsel look through that again and found no conflict. These, as you said, are public entities with no financial interest in any way.

Mr. RASKIN. All right. I want to apologize to you that this hearing, which should really be about how we can serve the taxpayers of America better, has been derailed for a whole coalition of partisan, political, and parochial purposes today. But in any event, you are doing a good job, and thank you for sticking with the administrative process and with the rule of law, such as it is. I yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. I have to defend my friend, Mr. Connolly. I believe he is acting in a bipartisan way,

not a partisan way. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Palmer, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Carnahan, some of the questions that I have about the whole situation with Federal properties has to do with workforce, which you really do not have any control over, the low productivity that we are now seeing in Federal workforce because of the failure of so many employees to actually report to the office. My friend and the Chairman, Mr. Comer, pointed out that it found that 17 out of 24 Federal agency headquartered buildings were less than 25 percent occupied.

Now, what I want is for people to come back to work, and if we do not need them, we need to reduce our workforce. But if people are not going to come to work, then we need to reduce the workforce. One way or another, we need to consolidate some of these holdings, determine what we really need, and then divest our portfolio of the balance. Have you given any thought to that or even repurpose? And I will come back to that in a moment.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. Yes, sir. This is exactly what we are working on. I mentioned that we have a national portfolio review that has been done, and we last week announced that we want to dispose of 23 properties just as a downpayment to get started on this. They are scattered around the country. It is a reduction of 3.5 million square feet of space, which is a lot, and a cost avoidance of over a billion dollars.

Mr. PALMER. Yes. Well, there are other opportunities, too. You could convert those facilities for other uses, and we did that with the Old Post Office.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Correct.

Mr. PALMER. Prior to that, I think we were losing about \$6 million a year maintenance costs maintaining, basically, an empty building, and then this Committee approved a contract with the Trump organization to convert it to a hotel, and then we turned that around by \$9 million a year to a plus \$3 million per year in revenue. So, are we looking at opportunities for conversion in that regard?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, there are some conversions like that. There are other examples also in Washington. The Hotel Monaco was another one where we call it an out lease.

Mr. PALMER. Right.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Where we have a long-term lease with someone to run—

Mr. PALMER. You have got the Hotel Monaco, and you have got the Trump Hotel, which was a great success, but there are probably other buildings that can be used for other purposes, but I do want to address something. This is a little personal, I hate to do it, but this whole issue of telework really concerns me because it impacts productivity so much, and you have got to have a collaborative effort that you just do not get teleworking. From March 2022 to March 2023, you were working out of, I think, Missouri 121 days. That is 46.5 percent of the work days in a calendar year. You traveled 34 days. I think that is fine, but there was another 64 days that you did not appear in person in your office. That is 71 percent of the calendar work days. Do you not need to be in your office?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, thanks for that question. Look, GSA has leaned in to telework for 20 years through multiple administrations, and the result—

Mr. PALMER. I understand that, but not like now. Not like now.

Ms. CARNAHAN. And the result that we have seen over this period, in the last ten years, we have been able to shrink our footprint, our real estate by 43 percent.

Mr. PALMER. But that is not the question.

Ms. CARNAHAN. And save \$300 million.

Mr. PALMER. I understand. And this is why I set this up and said I am really going to ask about something that is out of your purview. But when you talk about shrinking the footprint, that does not address the issue of are you getting the job done and has productivity increased or gone down. And, ma'am, productivity in the overall workforce in the United States is at levels lower than what we have seen in 40-something years. So, I think we have got a couple of problems here, one of which you are trying to address. And I am very appreciative of what you are trying to do, notwithstanding the FBI building, which I am all in for, for moving to Huntsville, but this whole issue of a dispersed workforce.

And then you add to that, at a time when we are \$33.6 trillion in debt, and we are paying 32.49 percent locality pay for people who are not here, and, I mean, you spent 121 days of your calendar work days in Missouri. It is just so frustrating to me, for us to do some things that are pretty good, like divesting our portfolio of properties, but then see our productivity go down and continue to spend money when we just cannot afford to spend any more money.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, do I have time to respond? Yes. I care a lot about productivity. This is the thing that we track closely. And I will tell you that in the last three years alone, our business volume has gone up 38 percent. In the last ten years, it has gone up 82 percent, and we also track customer satisfaction scores. So, the same as you would see in a private sector, it is on a scale of one to five, our customer satisfaction score during that period has gone from 3.0 to 3.9 percent. So, I pay a lot of attention to these things. I want to make sure that we are giving good value to the American people, and we are delivering on our mission. That is what I commit to you, sir, and to the American People.

Mr. PALMER. Mr. Chairman, I began this by acknowledging that she does not have control over the workforce issues, but, you know, I grew up on a farm, and we kind of understood when the bees leave the hive, they are not making honey. And the GSA may be doing great work working remotely, but I do not think that is true across the entire Federal workforce, and you cannot do anything about it. All you can do is dispense with the property. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Mfume, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman, thank you, and thank the Ranking Member for calling us together on this. Administrator Carnahan, it is good to see you. To say the very least you have a tough job, and a job that oftentimes goes without a lot of thanks. So, I want to, at least on behalf of this Member of the Committee, thank you for the way you have proceeded in leading the GSA and for your

willingness to be very transparent and open before this Committee and other committees about a lot of things that we are all interested in but do not always understand.

I had hoped that we would spend most of the day talking about consolidation of Federal properties, the disposal of Federal properties, and the occupation rates or the lack thereof, and what kind of cost savings could be gleaned for the American taxpayer. I am particularly interested and would like to get at another time a detailed sort of orientation about the disposal of lease space and rent space and the plan that you have put together that will save \$60 billion over the next ten years. It is very, very important, and I want to come back to cost in just a moment to make another point.

Mr. Chairman, I do want to say something about this matter that has come up a couple of times about relocation. And I would like to ask unanimous consent that GSA's 40-page decision document be entered into the record of this Committee in this hearing. And I would ask also unanimous consent that the support letter and the reasons for the very strong support across the country, particularly by the National Urban League and the National Action Network, also be entered into the record without objection, I hope.

Chairman COMER. Without objection on both items, so ordered.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you. A couple of things. Madam Administrator, I want to go back to something that was mentioned earlier that I think bears repeating, and that is that the Virginia location was never a part of the original plan for the relocation and that this has gone on for 15 years, with House and Senate Committees working in tandem, Democrats and Republicans, to address the overwhelming need to replace the FBI headquarters and to establish a level playing ground for a competitive bidding process, which we have, and to make sure that we find a way to protect and to support the men and women that are working there.

As many of you may not know, there has been a net around this FBI building for a while because of falling debris. There was an employee there just a week or so back that had the ceiling and parts of it fall on their desk while they were working. It is not a digitally friendly building in terms of its conversion to do and be what it has to be to compete and to guard against threats that take place in this country. And without this sort of new emphasis and new opportunity, we risk the chance that we could fall further behind. This is mind boggling to me, but I would think, if nothing else, we have to make sure that this particular Agency is empowered to do what it has to do.

Now, a couple of quick things about this selection. Madam Administrator, Greenbelt, Maryland is the most accessible of all of the locations. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is what was found by the site selection authority. It is right on a metro line and a transit line, and the site in Springfield was about half a mile walk.

Mr. MFUME. And Greenbelt provides, by that same committee, the greatest scheduled certainty. Is that correct? Did you know it?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is correct because it does not require relocating existing tenants.

Mr. MFUME. And Greenbelt offers the greatest opportunity for the government's investment to positively impact the greater

Washington, D.C. area, both on the Maryland side and the Virginia side. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MFUME. And Greenbelt has the lowest overall cost to taxpayers. The total project to acquire and to build the building was, I think, at some point estimated to be \$26 million. That has gone up over time, but in comparison to the Springfield, Virginia site, it significantly dwarfs it in terms of costs savings. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MFUME. Is it correct that the Senate has set aside over \$300 million for this project, that money is already there through appropriations?

Ms. CARNAHAN. There is some money that has already been appropriated.

Mr. MFUME. Yes, I think it is \$375, but we will get it accurate. And is it true that the aggregate savings by having this building built and located where you have, and your committee has decided saves \$1 billion to American taxpayers? Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I am not sure where that number comes from, but we did determine it was the lowest cost for taxpayers.

Mr. MFUME. And I will share with you and the Committee how that number was derived, but it is significant cost. And so if we are really concerned and really conservative here about making sure that we are spending taxpayers' dollars efficiently and effectively, and we have wasted, as we have, 15 years of trying to make a decision, and if our law enforcement agency, the FBI, is outdated in terms of its capability because of limitations of its current space, it just seems to me that the best thing here is to find a way to take advantage of what has been a very, very, very transparent process. It has gone through every sort of disclosure, and everybody has looked at it, and not everybody is happy with it, but at some point in time, we cannot please everybody.

So, I want to thank you, Madam Administrator. This was not meant to be the topic of the hearing, but it is important, for the record at least, that we all understand how we got to where we are. And I hope that the Chairman will indeed bring you back again for some of these other questions.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Grothman from Wisconsin for 5 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes, thank you. GSA's Office of Evaluation Scientists is spending taxpayer money conducting a study at OPM's request to determine the effectiveness of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training on Federal workforces. First of all, you know about how much that is going to cost?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I do not.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. Could you comment on what you are trying to determine there, what your metrics are, what the goal of this stuff is?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I am not familiar with the study that you are referring to, but happy to learn more and circle back with you. I assume it is about just generally Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA), but I do not know specifically.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. I will try again. Maybe you can answer this one. Academic Research has found the DEIA and anti-bias

trainings to be expensive with no gain. Why is the Federal Government spending taxpayer dollars on a new evaluation to prove that its DEIA trainings are any different instead of relying on already available research?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, again, Congressman, I apologize that I am not familiar with the study, but I am happy to circle back with you—

Mr. GROTHMAN. Sure.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. And your team about it.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I will give you one final question then move on to something else. What is the purpose of rigorous DEIA training in the Federal workforce? What is the purpose of it?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, I can speak for myself. The American taxpayers and all of Americans deserve a government that represents them, and government is better when it represents all the people. And so, understanding that and making sure that we are reflective of that in our values of agencies, I think, is important. As to the study that you are talking about, I will tell you I am not sure what the scope of it is, but I will definitely look into it.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Well, I will switch to telework here. Occupancy rates for the Federal office buildings are very low. With GAO noting 17 of 24 major agencies are less than 25 percent occupied, which is kind of amazing, why are taxpayers footing the bill to maintain millions of square feet of office space when less than a quarter of it is being used in many cases?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, Congressman, I agree with you. We need to figure out how to optimize and shrink the Federal real estate footprint. The GAO report also said the biggest obstacle to GSA being able to do that is access to the Federal Buildings Fund. That is the fund that all of the rent payments that agencies pay to the government goes into, but it has been diverted off in the last 12 years, a billion dollars a year to spend on other things. So, what we are asking for from this Committee and from the Congress is to fix that and make sure that the funds that are paid for rent are used on public buildings, not for other things.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Where else they are using it for?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is a question for the Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) Committee, but they allocated otherwise within that Appropriation Subcommittee.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I will ask you to expand a little on that because when you say some of the major agency headquarter buildings, only 25 percent is used. Do you have an idea how long this has been going on?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I do not have occupancy rate numbers, historic occupancy rate numbers, but what I can say is all agencies right now are thinking through how much space they need and thinking about how we could potentially consolidate. GSA has a history of doing that ourselves. Over the last ten years, we have moved out of two different spaces in the Washington area, one, an expensive lease in Arlington and another a federally owned building in the District, and consolidated everyone into our headquarters building. That saved \$300 million dollars for taxpayers straight up and shrunk our footprint by 43 percent. So, we know

how to do this. What we need is the flexibility and the certainty about funding to be able to get it done.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I guess that most Federal workers on the general schedule get an additional 33-percent pay bump for having to work here in town, which just has to be incredibly expensive. Because of that, have you ever considered moving some of these agencies to a place where they would not get this bump?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, again, I do not decide what agency missions are to decide where they need people. I can speak about GSA. Seventy-five percent of our workforce is outside of Washington and 75 percent of our assets are outside of Washington, so that is what we deal with every day. And so, our teams are scattered around the country, and, frankly, I think that is good for the American people and good for delivering the kind of service focus aspect.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. So, you would encourage other agencies to maybe take advantage of this, particularly as we are shuffling around where we put employees with all this empty space. I am not sure how far away from Washington, D.C. you have to be not to get the additional bump, but would it be better to be 40 or 50 miles into Maryland or into Virginia?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, I will have to check on that. Again, we are not the ones who set those rates, and I do not know what those schedules look like, but the notion that—folks need to go where their missions are, right? That is what we have done at GSA, and I assume that is what other agencies are focused on at this moment as well.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Right. My good friend, Congressman Zinke, was doing that in Interior before he had to leave. Okay. Thanks.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Brown from Ohio for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to point out the mere fact that someone has to ask why or what the purpose of DEI training is, is the very reason we need more of it. And until we get to a place of parity and equity for people that look like me, Black and Brown people in this country, then we should continue to invest in diversity, equity, and inclusion training in this country.

So, Mr. Chairman, under President Biden and Administrator Carnahan's leadership, the General Service Administration, or GSA, is providing the essential services of maintaining the Federal Government's properties, procuring goods and services, and acquiring IT systems on its behalf, and admittedly, as we seen today, this is no small feat. Administrator Carnahan, I want to commend you on your transformative leadership at GSA, bringing the Federal Government into the 21st century, and effectively managing millions of square feet of Federal property and hundreds of thousands of vehicles owned and operated by the government.

I was pleased to hear about the Workplace 2030 Initiative in which GSA is preparing for the future of Federal work and the GSA's groundbreaking plans to center the climate crisis by transitioning to a fully electric Federal fleet and pivoting to climate conscious construction materials. I am also excited about GSA's efforts to strengthen, support, and sustain women- and minority-owned businesses through President Biden's whole-of-government approach based in equity. GSA's equity initiatives are supporting

majority/minority communities across the country, including in Ohio's 11th congressional District. In 2022, GSA released its Equity Action Plan.

Administrator Carnahan, I understand you established a position of Senior Advisor to the Administrator for Equity, for which I applaud you. So what additional ways is GSA centering equity in the totality of its work?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, thank you for that question. As I said, equity is important to us because it is reflective of the American people. We want to have a government that reflects our people, that makes the government better, and it serves all the people better. One of the things that we have really focused on recently is recruitment, and we have focused on HBCUs as a prime source of talent that we can bring into the government. We are also very focused on small- and women-owned and small disadvantaged-owned businesses. We are really proud of the amount of our procurement that we can do with these small businesses. It makes a difference in communities where we all want to support that, so it is a way we can give good value to the American taxpayers and also support communities.

The final thing I just want to mention is a thing called the Good Neighbor Program, and that really is about how we work with communities to make sure things like building sitings are actually good for the communities. There was a great example recently in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The new courthouse was going up, and we worked closely with the community to figure out what part of town made sense for them for economic development purposes to put that courthouse because they knew it would be an anchor in a new neighborhood and drive economic development. So, we think of equity as a center of a lot of what we do, equity and procurement, when we are talking about small businesses, and equity in siting when we are talking about where we put Federal assets.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you. Additionally, something I am particularly focused on is making sure diverse vendors and businesses get a shot at opportunities, which historically have been contracted to large, predominantly white corporations. So, Administrator, how is GSA providing equitable opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses and investors? Can you give us some specifics on that?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. So, our small business spend number is the highest it has ever been. Our total spend at GSA was about \$20 billion, and I think somewhere in the 40 percent range was small businesses. And so, we take this very, very seriously because we know we can get basically a double win, both a good value for taxpayers and having the economic benefit for those communities that we want to support.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you again, and I do not need to remind you, Administrator, that GSA oversees about \$75 billion in annual contracts to businesses and vendors across the United States. It is critical this funding be awarded in an equitable way, recognizing the importance and worth of Black and Brown businesses, underserved communities, and women-owned initiatives. When our small businesses in underserved communities thrive, we all succeed. So, thank you again for the amazing work that you have been doing,

and thank you again for coming before this Committee, Administrator. And with that, I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Burlison from Missouri for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURLISON. Greetings, Mrs. Carnahan.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Good to see you.

Mr. BURLISON. You know, being a Missourian, I am sure you are aware of Cerner, the former company out of Kansas City. I worked as a consultant for them and others for 20 years and saw really a revolution happen after COVID of employees being able to work from home, and the concern from the private sector was that productivity would decline. Remarkably, it did not. It actually improved. And so, I was encouraged to hear that you keep count of or an account of the productivity from some of these agencies. And I wanted to hear from you if you can elaborate on what systems or methodologies and software that you might be using to actually account for the productivity.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, thanks for the question, and we are just focused on GSA when it comes to our productivity numbers.

Mr. BURLISON. So just your Agency specifically?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. I know that OMB and others will be looking at those numbers and gathering them from other agencies, but GSA has, as I said, leaned into telework and remote work for 20 years, like through multiple administrations. And we have been very intentional about making sure we see the results of that, both reducing our footprint, saving money, but also better business volume. And as I said, business volume has gone up 82 percent in the last ten years, 37 percent in the last three years, which was the most remote the Agency has ever been, and our customer satisfaction scores have gone up. So, for us, those are the metrics that really matter and we pay close attention to.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you. And so, your own office that you occupy, your office space for GSA, given the remote work that you are now implementing, is there any plans to reduce the footprint of GSA's office space?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. We are thinking about that all the time and talking to other agencies about how we can either, you know, share a space, move out of that space, and have somebody else in that space, and so there are lots of conversations going on. One of the other things just to note in the short term is we are using an entire wing of our building for the Presidential transition, which GSA is tasked to do every year, and sometimes it is very expensive if you go out and rent space for that. But we decided that we could use our own space and convert that and be able to save a lot of money in that way because the building was not fully occupied.

So, we are being very thoughtful about this and, as I said, have a history of consolidating our own, both here in the Washington area where we got out of an expensive lease and got out of another building, to consolidate into that headquarters and save \$300 million. So, we want to do more of this.

Mr. BURLISON. I had a question about some of the Biden rules that have been implemented and the impact that you might be experiencing. So, I know one of them was to require project labor agreements going forward. How has that impacted your decision-

making process? How has it impacted the costs for some of the construction? And then finally, do you have a waiver process? How do you go about that?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So obviously, we are all in for trying to make sure there are good American domestic jobs, union jobs whenever we can, and using the government's buying power to reflect that. In some places, that is easier than others, but in all places, you can make sure that there are certain, you know, contractors that are doing right by their workers. And so, we do have teams that think about this, ask about this. If it is unavailable, then there are waiver processes, but——

Mr. BURLISON. Okay.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. As a first choice, we want to use that.

Mr. BURLISON. So, I mean, you come from rural Missouri——

Ms. CARNAHAN. We give a preference, if any.

Mr. BURLISON. Yes. Your family comes from rural Missouri, and so you are aware that there are some pockets that just will not have that presence, so it is good to hear that there are some waiver opportunities. My other question has to do with the electric vehicle mandate, and, you know, again, being from rural Missouri, my question has to do with, you know, what are the increased costs for the agencies that are now converting to electric vehicles? Is it, on average, over 10,000 a year per vehicle? Is that a safe estimate?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. So, I can get all those numbers for you about what the cost differentials are.

Ms. CARNAHAN. But the thing that it is important to note that all of this, you mentioned the word "mandate," and that is not exactly how we are thinking of it. It is really mission driven. So, for agencies that have a use case where an electric vehicle could make sense for them, we are helping them get those, so we are not forcing these on any agencies. Agencies are deciding that they want to do it, and we are helping them procure them at good costs.

Mr. BURLISON. And within rural America, you will provide waivers for places where there are no EV stations or it does not make sense?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. So again, the agency decides what its mission needs are, right? And then, they come to us and we help them get vehicles at the best price, so we are not telling them who in their agency needs what kind of vehicle. They are making those decisions, and we are helping them buy.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Lee from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. This country is riddled with division and inequity that are entrenched in our policies, laws, and institutions. These entrenched disparities leave so many of us out of the conversation, out of opportunity, and out of the room where the fate of our communities are decided. Before my Republican colleagues get triggered by the word "equity," I want to remind them that this conversation is about many of the things they claim to support: the power of local voices, the inclusion of rural communities, and the well-being of people in their districts as well as mine. Members of underserved communities, many of whom have

endured generations of discrimination and disinvestment, still confront significant barriers to realizing the full promise of America. Black and Brown people, indigenous people, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA) people, disabled people, and others are so often forgotten or intentionally left behind. The Federal Government has a responsibility and a duty to make every effort to remove these barriers, and they must take a whole-of-government approach to do so.

Administrator Carnahan, I want to ask you a few questions about some of the initiatives GSA is focusing on to advance equity. How does GSA's Good Neighbor Program support local community goals, economic recovery, and environmental justice?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, thanks for that question. I am really proud of the Good Neighbor Program. It is something that you would expect the Federal Government to do this all the time, but, historically, has not always happened. And so it really is about, I think, intentionality, about figuring out how we can be positive drivers in communities. There has been a long history of Federal Government taking activity that has divided communities, whether it is in transportation access or highways going through neighborhoods, but we know that the part that we play, which is siting decisions that impact communities, ought to be done talking to communities. They are the ones who know what they need and where they can make urban planning decisions that can transform neighborhoods. So that is what we do.

I will say that one area in particular that we are focused on is in the tribal land. We got a significant amount of money in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to invest in border crossings at the Northern and Southern borders. Some of that goes through tribal lands, and so to make sure that we are dealing with those nation-to-nation relationships in ways that are appropriate, but also get good value for taxpayers.

Ms. LEE. Thank you so much. And so, GSA expanded this program significantly in 2022, correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes.

Ms. LEE. Awesome. How else is GSA ensuring its public building footprints is contributing to the prosperity, environmental justice of local communities?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, as I mentioned, we were very serious about siting decisions that we make. I mentioned earlier today that in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for example, your home state, there was a new courthouse that was put up, and it was in collaboration with that community that area of town was decided on because it was an area that had not been always invested in, and it was going to be an economic anchor in that part of the community. And so that is how we can make a big difference is the Federal Government. We use our power both in buying things but also placing assets to help communities grow.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. GSA is also conducting the first of its kind evaluation to assess the effectiveness of equity efforts across American Rescue Plan programs. Administrator, has this evaluation provided any insight so far, and how will its findings be used to improve other programs?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I think there was a reference earlier to that evaluation, and I am just not familiar with it, but I will find out—

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. And circle back with you.

Ms. LEE. Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

Ms. LEE. One of the many problem facing so many of these marginalized and underserved communities is the inequities in technology design and delivery. This means that those who most need government services will often have the most difficulty accessing them. GSA has indicated that improving this is a priority to better serve our communities. How is GSA implementing this priority, and how is it making a difference for constituents in districts like mine?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, thanks so much for that question. You know, this is the thing that is really important. Like, government does not get to choose its customers, right? It is our job to serve everyone, which means not only do we need to focus on security and privacy and ease of access, but also accessibility and to ensure that we get that right.

There is a particular thing that we have done at GSA to create shared services. So, other government agencies can do this relatively easily because we have helped pave the way. It is a thing called the U.S. Web Design System, which, essentially, think about it, like, if you are going to set up a website for the government, think of it like a hardware store that has all the bits and pieces that you would need to create a website, but it ensures that it is accessible for everyone. And so that is the kind of thing that we are trying to focus on when it comes to shared services, and it gives better service to everybody.

Ms. LEE. Thank you. I cannot overemphasize how critical it is that GSA and all Federal agencies continue to advance equity in everything they do. Administrator Carnahan, I just wanted to thank you for your testimony. I look forward to seeing your Agency's work implemented to elevate underserved communities and bring us closer to equal opportunity that we all deserve. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Gosar from Arizona for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Carnahan, as you know, government property designated as surplus can be sold to local and state governments and the public. Given the fact that teleworking has significantly increased over the last past few years, has the amount of surplus property sold increased at the same rate?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, as I mentioned, Congressman, just last week we announced 23 properties that we want to put on the disposal list, and that would be a cost savings of a billion dollars and a reduction of 3.5 million square feet.

Mr. GOSAR. I get that. Now, I guess my point is, as you know, we are talking trillions in these debts that we have. Are we missing some areas that could be utilized or looked at for surplus or for disposal?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Look, I think there is a huge opportunity at this moment to both get out of leases that saves a lot of money, billions of dollars, and get out of unneeded buildings, also saving billions of dollars. But as I said before, the reason that this is slow—and this is not just me saying it, this is what the GAO said in their report—is it is lack of access to the Federal Buildings Fund. Again, that is the fund that rent payments go into. When agencies pay rent, that either goes to the owner of the building if it is a lease, or it goes to maintain buildings of its own.

Every year for the past 12 years, we have had more than a billion dollars used for other things. That is a choice made by the Appropriations Committee. So as a result, we have backlog. As a result, we are unable to move people into new space. And so, the one secret thing that we can do to—that secret bullet to fix this—is to have certainty around the Federal Buildings Fund, and we will absolutely be able to accelerate these disposals and save more money.

Mr. GOSAR. So, in a priority aspect—I just want to make sure I have this right—if a state, a local, and/or business wants this property, who gets that, or is it based upon price?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, there are various factors. I wish I could say it was simple, but there is sort of a rank order, and state and local government gets the first shot at that. And then eventually, if NGOs do not want it, state and local governments do not want it, then it goes on to the public market. And so, as I mentioned, those 23 properties that we are planning to dispose off, we already have interest from some local governments to think about, you know, former courthouses could become new municipal, you know, halls, and so that, to me, is what makes sense here. We need to have our Federal assets be useful in the communities where they are sitting, and if they do not have people and they are not being useful there, then they ought to be used in other ways.

Mr. GOSAR. Got you. Could they also be looked at it from different groups like veterans? How do the veterans play in these?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, certainly if the VA needs some of these buildings, we could talk to them about reusing it. That would not be a disposal. That would be a transfer to a different agency.

Mr. GOSAR. Right. Got you. Now, the GSA has an arm called the Technology Transformation Service manages the Made in America Office, which seeks to enforce Federal law, requiring agencies to buy American. Agencies can seek waivers to buy foreign products. What percentage of Federal acquisitions are American made?

Ms. CARNAHAN. As we sit here today, I do not know that number, but I will ask my team to find out and circle back with you, sir.

Mr. GOSAR. Okay.

Mr. GOSAR. How many waivers allowing the agencies to buy foreign made products have been granted under the Biden Administration?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Same answer. I do not have that as I sit here, but we can find it.

Mr. GOSAR. Okay.

Mr. GOSAR. And what trends do the agencies buying American products look like for our agencies buying more American-made products under the current Administration or less?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, it is a very high priority for the President and the whole Administration to use our Federal buying power to support American jobs and American industry. So again, I will get back to you with the numbers, but just know it is a priority.

Mr. GOSAR. Okay.

Mr. GOSAR. Now, and you talked about, for example, the electric cars. So, you know, I have Arizona and I have Yuma, so the—

Ms. CARNAHAN. I have been in Yuma—

Mr. GOSAR [continuing]. MCS.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. Recently, yes.

Mr. GOSAR. And so, they cannot have electric vehicles because it gets too hot. They do not even work. So, does that play into your decision as well?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So again, as I mentioned to Congressman Burlison, we do not make the ultimate decision about what the mission needs are. That will depend on location. It will depend on what the job is and what they need it for. We just help people buy things at good prices, so that is our part of the job. So, it is up to the agencies to decide whether it makes any sense for them.

Mr. GOSAR. So, they would go through the Department of Defense. Department of Defense would come to you. Is that the way it will go?

Ms. CARNAHAN. We do some with the Department of Defense, but definitely with all the civilian agencies, so, yes, they would decide. If somebody was in Yuma, they would say it makes sense for us to have—we need a vehicle that looks like X for this mission, and, GSA, can you help us get one of these at good price.

Mr. GOSAR. So, you would definitely supersede, so if it were all, like, electric cars, you could definitely supersede that with this different type of car, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Again, it is the agency that decides what they need, and then come to us and say we need a conventional fuel vehicle, we need an electric vehicle, and then, we help them procure that and get that.

Mr. GOSAR. So once again, last question. They have to get a waiver from the Department of Defense for that, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I am not sure what the Department of—

Mr. GOSAR. Okay.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. Defense rules are about this.

Mr. GOSAR. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. Would you yield your remaining seconds to Mr. Grothman for one last question?

Mr. GOSAR. I will yield to Mister.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Just a quick question. I know you said that you are trying to give contracts to disadvantaged people. How do you determine disadvantaged? Is that a racial thing? Is that an economic thing? What is disadvantaged?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, so I am sure you are familiar with Small Business Administration (SBA), and it has 8(a) classifications and other things, so we, as government as a whole, has definitions about different categories of business.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. I recently toured a business. It kind of offended me. A guy, you know, a person of color, but inherited, obviously, a wildly high-price business, and I was told that they were

getting benefits because of their ancestry. Is that possible? Is that going on out there?

Chairman COMER. And the gentleman's time is expired, but please answer.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. I am not sure what you are referring to, but I know that the SBA sets up a lot of the rules around 8(a) businesses.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Goldman.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Once again, here we are days away from a government shutdown, the world is burning, and we are here talking about office space. Meanwhile, Republicans cannot pass their own unilateral appropriations bills. They refused to work with Democrats. They refused to abide by the top-line appropriation numbers that they themselves negotiated, agreed to, and passed in June. And separately, they refused to unify the Congress to fund our democratic allies fighting terrorism and authoritarianism around the world, our democratic ally, Ukraine, resisting an illegal invasion by Vladimir Putin, and a brutal and barbaric invasion of Israel by a terrorist organization, Hamas, trying to eradicate Israel, the lone, true democracy in the Middle East. Ukraine, Israel, and the innocent Palestinians in Gaza desperately need our help, and yet, Republicans are holding that aid hostage with their political gimmicks and games, and here we are talking about office space.

Now in fairness, this is a welcome break from the pathetic and desperate impeachment inquiry. It appears as if the Chairman has at least acknowledged that the first and only public impeachment hearing was such a bust, that he does not want to do it in public anymore because, God forbid, the American people would once again see what a sham it is. But that has not stopped my colleagues on the other side of the aisle from issuing subpoenas for closed-door depositions. That way, they can continue to cherry pick testimony that misleads and gaslights the American people.

Now, over the past couple of weeks, since October 7, I have met with numerous families of hostages in Gaza who are searching for any information about their loved ones held in captivity. One I met with was Avihai Brodutch from the Kibbutz Kfar Aza, which I visited in August. Avihai described how he took his gun to go fight the terrorists while his wife and three children hid in their safe room. Avihai was shot in the leg, and he could not move. In the meantime, his wife and children were taken hostage by Hamas.

[Slide]

Mr. GOLDMAN. And here are Avihai's three children who have been held in captivity for 39 days: Ofri age ten, Yuval age eight, and Uriah age four.

Now, inside a neighboring home belonging to American-Israeli, Samdar and Roy Idan, Hamas terrorists murdered Samdar in front of two of their three children, ages ten and six, who she had placed in a closet to hide and, ultimately, to save their lives. Roy was outside with his 3-year-old daughter, Abigail, when he was shot and killed right in front of his baby girl.

[Slide]

Mr. GOLDMAN. This is Abigail. Now, Abigail somehow got away and ran to Avihai's home where she was also kidnapped with Avihai's wife and three children, and they all remain in captivity, at least we hope. Now, I have had the opportunity to meet a couple of times over the past few weeks with Elizabeth Naftali, Samdar's aunt and Abigail's great aunt. She is absolutely devastated with grief, fear, and worry about her little niece, Abigail. She barely sleeps, has difficulty eating, and is frequently overcome with grief that she cannot even get out of bed.

So, what did the Committee Republicans do last week with Ms. Naftali? They did not reach out to her to see how Congress could be of assistance to her as she grieves and waits for information about Abigail. No. Instead, the Majority subpoenaed her. That is right. The Chairman used the awesome power and authority of the U.S. Congress to target Ms. Naftali as part of his fishing expedition against Hunter Biden, allegedly because Ms. Naftali may have bought some art. Look, we know that our colleagues across the aisle are desperate to find some actual evidence of wrongdoing to justify their failed impeachment inquiry. But even under these desperate circumstances, I am still shocked and disappointed that you have targeted someone grieving from the horrific attack of October 7 for your impeachment investigation.

Mr. Chairman, this subpoena is beneath the Congress of the United States. And I ask you here and now, will you agree to immediately withdraw the subpoena to Ms. Naftali until a later date when she is not in such emotional distress and can properly focus on this matter? And I yield to you to answer the question.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman's time has expired, but I will answer the question. We have spoken with her attorney and asked what would be best for her schedule. As you know, we are trying to get as many of these completed before the end of the year as possible, but they gave us a date in mid to late January—her attorney. And we said that would be fine, so we are catering to her schedule. We will continue this impeachment inquiry. As you know, there is overwhelming evidence that the American people are concerned as to what the Biden family did to receive millions and millions of dollars from our enemies around the world, and we will continue to provide answers to the American people just as we have done over the past six months.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Will the Chairman yield for—

Chairman COMER. No. Your time has expired. The Chair now recognizes—

Mr. GOLDMAN. I just want to clarify that you said, "as you know." I do not know that, nor do I agree with it.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Perry for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERRY. I thank the Chairman. Well, I am somewhat fascinated by my colleague on the other side of the aisle talking about evidence that does not exist while I sat in a room during the last Administration, and they literally made up evidence to impeach the President, evidence that did not exist or supported lies that do exist to impeach the President, and so his words fall a little hollow at this moment.

Madam, you are not here for any of that. I want to ask you some more questions about the transaction regarding the new FBI headquarters. It seems that the FBI Director Wray said that Ms. Albert had unilaterally changed the criteria at the last minute in a way that would benefit Greenbelt. Is that true?

Ms. CARNAHAN. No, sir.

Mr. PERRY. So, is he a liar? Somebody is lying. He is saying, I am going to read what he said here, "Albert had unilaterally changed the criteria at the last minute in a way that would benefit the Greenbelt." So——

Ms. CARNAHAN. I think there may be some confusion on the part of the Director about what the process is.

Mr. PERRY. So, when was it changed? When was the criteria changed?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, the sequence of events, just to go back a little bit, began in 2022 in December with that budget bill where GSA was directed——

Mr. PERRY. Yes, but she was not working on it then, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. She was. She was working——

Mr. PERRY. She was working on it then. Was she a member of the panel?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, Ms. Albert was the head of the Public Building Service. That is——

Mr. PERRY. Right. I know she is the head, but she was not one of the conferees, as maybe you would call them, or the three individuals, two from GSA and one from FBI, that were working on the site selection.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, that panel did not meet until July 2023.

Mr. PERRY. Okay.

Ms. CARNAHAN. So back in December 2022, Congress directed GSA to have consultations with both delegations——

Mr. PERRY. Right.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. In Maryland and Virginia to then consider the site selection process and then make a selection.

Mr. PERRY. So, nothing changed from that period forward to the actual site selection? Nothing changed——

Ms. CARNAHAN. So——

Mr. PERRY [continuing]. In the criteria. No one changed it, and nothing changed?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, let me just keep going with our timeline. So, we had those consultations in March 2023. The panel and the rest of the team, not just the panel, was looking at the criteria to see——

Mr. PERRY. Right.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. If some of those things need to be weighted or changed.

Mr. PERRY. I get it, ma'am.

Ms. CARNAHAN. And that is what happened. So that was announced, and that was made, by the way, coordinated with the FBI, and that change was announced in July 2023.

Mr. PERRY. So, it did not change from July 2023. I do not mean to cut you short, but I got a limited amount of time here. It did not change, according to you, from July 2023 until the decision was made. Is that correct? Nothing changed?

Ms. CARNAHAN. No, sir.

Mr. PERRY. Okay. So, then Christopher Wray is lying then because it says, "changed the criteria at the last minute," and I am thinking the last minute seems a little bit closer than last July. I mean, Ms. Albert left GSA in October, right, last month?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is correct.

Mr. PERRY. Yes, and the decision was announced this month. So, in previous testimony you said that you had turned to her. She countervailed. I know you do not like the term that Mr. Jordan used where she changed. I do not remember what term he used, but you did not like it where she disagreed.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Overturned.

Mr. PERRY. Overturned the ruling, the unanimous ruling of the committee, but you said she was the real estate expert, right? And that is why you—

Ms. CARNAHAN. She is a top real estate professional.

Mr. PERRY. A top real estate professional. Do you know where she holds a real estate license?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I do not.

Mr. PERRY. Do you know if she has a real estate license?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I know her career has been spent in real estate around the Washington metropolitan—

Mr. PERRY. Did she have a broker's license? Has she ever stood for the exam? Has she ever sold a house?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, sir, I know she has made site selections on very significant siting decisions.

Mr. PERRY. I could, too. God bless her. She has got a wonderful resume. I have got it right here. She even served in the Army. Hello, I am an Army guy. She was in Signal Corps. She was in the 141st Signal Battalion of the 1st Armored Division in Germany. That is awesome. We appreciate her service. That does not mean she is a real estate expert yet, and because she has had these positions, it does not mean she has an idea.

I mean, she has got an engineering background and all that stuff, but you said top real estate expert, and this is site selection of real estate. Do you find it odd at all that the site that she selected is not the most optimal? As the smallest buildable area, restrictive site conditions like the presence of wetland and the greatest distance between other FBI stakeholders? Do you find that odd? Is that compelling? Does that mean anything? She is the real estate expert.

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, Congressman, when the original bidding was taking place back in 2014, there were dozens of potential sites around the Washington Metro area. It was reduced down—

Mr. PERRY. I get it, ma'am, but I do not—

Ms. CARNAHAN. Each those three was agreed by the FBI and everyone else to meet their basic mission needs, which includes the site—

Mr. PERRY. What about the other three members of the panel that unanimously decided another location? Did you just reject whatever their findings were? Apparently, you reject them, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, the site selection process calls for—

Mr. PERRY. We are going to go to the process. Ma'am, a corrupt process is still a corrupt process. Just because they have a process,

and oh, by the way because you ran it by your attorneys, I mean, I do not want you to be offended, but maybe you should be offended, we do not see that as meaningful because they work for you. If you got an independent review, maybe we would see that as somewhat meaningful, but all these people work for you, so you are all doing the same thing. You are all scratching each other's backs here to make sure that you are all covering each other's rear end. The American people are sick of that. I yield the balance.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Crockett from Texas.

Ms. CROCKETT. I come in this Committee and just when I think I cannot be shocked anymore, I get shocked to the next level. And I listened to Dan, who—I was with him in Israel in August—and I listened to him tell very real stories of real issues that are taking place in this world right now, issues that we have been charged with the responsibility of being the adults in the room and trying to solve. And as I listened to him, I thought, man, I was actually going to deal with what we are supposed to be talking about. And then, of course, I get a colleague from the other side of the aisle, who could hear of the pain and suffering as Dan was telling the stories, and the only thing that he heard, because it is seemingly what happens in this chamber, is that there is a level of callousness and a lack of humanity.

A lot of times, we say the words, “we care about the American people,” but then the actions do not line up with caring about the American people. And so, after hearing that story, the only thing that my colleague heard was about made-up evidence as it relates to the former President, the twice impeached, 91-indicted count former President, who is currently sitting in a fraud trial, who has also been found liable of sexual assault. The only thing that he heard was this bit about made-up evidence.

And so, he says, well, the Democrats did not have the right to do what they did when they impeached the President. I disagree, and it looks like at least four grand juries feel like they have got some evidence, or maybe that is made up as well, or maybe once the convictions come down, which there will be a conviction in some territory—I say that with all confidence as someone who was practicing law for 17 years—I am sure they will say that that was made up.

I am sure that they do not believe the co-defendants that have come out and pled guilty as relates to the charges in Georgia, and I am sure they think that that is made up, just like they said the January 6 was made up after they ran for their lives. And I am sure that they believe that the convictions that came out of January 6, those were made up too, but let me tell you what is not made up as they live in their fairy tale world.

What is not made up is that the government has a looming shut-down in three days and they decided to drag you in and talk about the job that you are not doing. And before I go into it, I do appreciate the work that you do, especially as a girl that grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, and fondly remember the better days of Missouri when your father was the Governor. So, I will tell you what is not made up and what is real life. Number one, I want to recenter us

on what it is your job is. Your job has nothing to do with telework last time I checked. Is that true or not?

Ms. CARNAHAN. That is correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. Okay. All right, because I do not know how the American people are going to get this straight when the Members of Congress cannot really figure out what your job is. So, that is not your job, but you deal with a lot of real estate, so I just want to zone in on that because I do not have too much time left. But for those that do not understand, there are government leases, and most commercial leases go for more than a year, say, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Yes. Usually more than maybe even two years, right?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Usually, a commercial lease is a very long-term lease, correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. And the price usually goes down the longer the term.

Ms. CROCKETT. Absolutely. So typically, your client has to sign a longer lease, all right? But none of us saw COVID-19 happening, and while we are centered on talking about telework, it is really important that we zone in on something that you have said over and over and people are ignoring you. You said what makes it difficult for you to do your job is a lack of certainty.

And this government shutdown, this is the second one just this year that we are running up on, and we are kicking the can down the road because we are going to run up on another one in January. It looks like we are going to run up on two now, January and February, if they can get this passed. Can you please explain why a lack of certainty has a negative impact on you doing what you are charged to do for the American people?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, thanks for that question. You know, real estate is a long-term thing. When you are buying a house or you are buying a piece of property, you do not just do that overnight. You have to plan your finances to make sure that it works. And when it comes to the Federal Government, it is not different. We have to have, particularly when we are maintaining buildings, we have to have a plan. We have got the biggest commercial real estate portfolio in the country. They are all in a different state of need, and we need to be able to have plans to address those things.

And the only way you do that is with some certainty, and not having clarity about what a budget is going to be and kicking the can down the road to the next year does not make the cost go down. It makes the cost go up. And so, we have seen that happen over and over again because, again, of this lack of funding of the Federal Buildings Fund.

Ms. CROCKETT. And you know what? To be clear, I remember when we had the first government shutdown looming and we all have our own leases for our properties as well, I had to call my property manager and say because the Federal Government cannot get their stuff together, just so you know, I may not be able to pay my bills, and I hope you do not kick me out. That is not any way that we should be governing and talking about the fact that we are

actually being fiscally responsible because it is just the opposite of it.

Thank you so much for your dedication to this country. I really appreciate your time and for you putting up with the antics. I yield.

Chairman COMER. Would the gentlelady yield to a question?

Ms. CROCKETT. I am out of time.

Chairman COMER. The Chair recognizes Mrs. Luna.

Mrs. LUNA. Would you like some time?

Chairman COMER. No, you take your 5 minutes, Mrs. Luna.

Mrs. LUNA. All right. Thank you. Ms. Carnahan, thank you very much for being here. And to address the government shutdown, you know, I always find it interesting being lectured on these things, when in the last, I do not know, 20 years, Congress has been broken. And the fact that we have been passing nothing but omnibuses and CRs that do not really address the issue and allow us to really do our jobs.

So just out of curiosity, how do you justify spending \$1 billion on furnishing office spaces that are not being used? The reason that I ask is because we are seeing right now that this country, future generations, me being a new mother and having a child, we are being tapped to really answer for this reckless spending. And frankly, I think that when you have a facility that is not being used in the way that it should be, why should we continue to give you guys funding for that?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I have heard reference to the whole furniture and buying things for empty office spaces.

Mrs. LUNA. Yes, mainly addressing the telework policy, but yes.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Right. So, I am not exactly sure what furniture was being bought, so I can try to look into this. But I will tell you that the government did not shut down during the pandemic. People were working. Courthouses were operating. Federal facilities and prisons were operating. Embassies were operating.

Mrs. LUNA. Within reason, though, because I think one of the biggest issues that we had as Congressional Members is our constituent services were not being handled appropriately because we could not reach out to some of the actual agencies because they were not in the office. I can tell you that, you know, as a new mother, I am showing up for work, so why should bureaucrats not be held to the same account, right? I mean, if you did not show up to your job, do you think that you should still be getting paid? Question.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, yes. So——

Mrs. LUNA. You do?

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. People were working throughout the pandemic.

Mrs. LUNA. But within——

Ms. CARNAHAN. When they were teleworking does not mean they were not working.

Mrs. LUNA. But there is also no accountability for it because I am telling you that Members of Congress were not able to have their constituent services handled accurately because these agencies were not in person, and we could not get a hold of those people. But going back to the unnecessary spending when you have fa-

cilities, if you guys are indeed advocating for telework, though, what is the need to actually have a budget set aside to furnish these facilities? Don't you think that that is wasteful spending?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I think we can agree that we want government to work better and save money. So, what I want to talk about and work with you all on is how do we actually do that in practical terms.

Mrs. LUNA. Yes, agreed, but do you think, though, that government should have to budget to use a facility if people are indeed not coming in to use that facility? Don't you think that that is wasteful? Like, if you were paying to use a home that you did not occupy, do not you think that it would be kind of a waste of money?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, what I am very eager to work with the Committee on is how we can dispose of properties we do not need and optimize our footprint, and just keep what we do need—

Mrs. LUNA. I completely agree.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. Owned and occupied, so—

Mrs. LUNA. I completely agree, and I hope that we can work with you on that, which brings me to my next question. Recently, my colleague, Representative Gaetz, brought forward an amendment to a bill that would essentially kill any funding for the FBI new headquarters building. I think one of the biggest and craziest excuses I heard for them needing a facility, even though I think that right now the FBI is being weaponized, is that they had a mouse problem. But I would like to share with the American public that here in Congress, we also have a mouse problem in our House. And so, I think that that is probably, you know, what is good for the goose is good for the gander, and I think if we are not getting new facilities, they surely do not need one. But going back to what you were saying, do you really think the FBI needs a new facility? I mean, in all seriousness.

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I have had a tour of the FBI building, and, Congresswoman, I will tell you, it is falling apart.

Mrs. LUNA. Do you think that the—

Ms. CARNAHAN. There are nets that prevent people from being hit by concrete on the sidewalk outside. There are staff inside the FBI building that are at risk because the building is crumbling. So, I do think the FBI needs a new headquarters.

Mrs. LUNA. But do you think that it needs to necessarily be in Washington? I mean, maybe we could just do Americans a favor and downsize to the FBI altogether, and then we do not have to worry about that or maybe telework. I mean, it seems that the rest of the Federal Government wants to just phone in. The FBI, you know, taps phones, though, so it is a little bit different.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, I guess I would just say that Congress directed us at GSA to pick between three sites, two sites in Maryland and one site in Virginia. We are just doing what we were told to do by Congress in making that site selection.

Mrs. LUNA. Well, thank you very much, ma'am. I do appreciate that. You did say you wanted to work with us on, you know, coming down on some of that wasteful spending. Hopefully, we can fix the furniture issue. Maybe we can get people back to work. But, Chairman, I yield the rest of my time.

Chairman COMER. Thank you. The gentlelady yields. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Moskowitz from Florida.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How are you doing today?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Great. Good.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. You know, my Republican colleagues are so concerned about budgets. You know, meanwhile, they cannot keep the government open without Democrats, right? You know, they are so concerned about all of these things, but look what they have done the last, you know, 11 months in power, just utter and complete chaos, and the one thing they want to talk to you about today is this FBI building.

Well, I wonder who has texted them and emailed them to talk about the FBI building and the whole thing. That is it. You are here about this FBI building. I mean, could it be that Donald Trump is telling them to talk about this FBI building because he is just so mad at the Department of Justice? I mean, it is so transparent. And by the way, I do not know if you noticed, we have a war in Afghanistan and a war in Israel. We cannot get Israel foreign aid because the Speaker decided to politicize it, but they want to talk about furniture. Ah, that is definitely on the American people's mind, right, right there with gas stoves and ceiling fans, other hearings we have had in this Committee.

The Chairman mentioned something. Actually, he said that the Biden Administration cannot have it both ways, and I agree with that, Mr. Chairman, which is why I am happy to yield you some of my time today, Mr. Chairman, because I think you owe it to the American people to explain why you have gone on Fox News and told people that while the President was out of office, he had a loan with his brother, and, in a way, they were evading taxes. It has come out in the public that you also do business with your brother with potential loans. And so, since you have framed that and manipulated that with the American people that Joe Biden did something wrong when he was not in the office, I just would like to know if you would like to use some of my time.

Chairman COMER. I would love it.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Okay.

Chairman COMER. You retweeted that story, completely false. I have never loaned my brother one penny. My father, who was a dentist, had some farmland. He died, and my brother could not afford it. He wanted to sell it, but he wanted to keep it in the family, so I bought it from my brother. That story that you tweeted also said I had a shell company. That is bullshit. You can come to Monroe County and look at all the land that is titled in that LLC.

I think that the problem is, you know, the White House tried to get CNN to write that story. They went around and investigated all this bullshit that Ian Sams is trying to tell people that only dumb, financially illiterate people pick up on and said that it was a shell company because it was an LLC. They are so financially illiterate that you think because something says "LLC," it is a shell company. This company, which I financially disclosed, has properties, okay? It manages fowl, over 1,000 acres of land for hunting purposes. It owns different properties. I am one of the largest landowners in my home area, okay? I went to the bank and I borrowed

money, and I bought that land. I did not get wires from Romania, China. My family does not get wires, okay? I never loaned my brother money. I do not have an LLC. But you and Goldman, who is Mr. Trust Fund continue to——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I am reclaiming my time.

Chairman COMER. No. I am not going to give you your time. We can stop the clock. You look like a Smurf here just going around and all this stuff. Now, listen——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Chairman, you have——

Chairman COMER. No, I am going to take——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Hold on. If we are——

Chairman COMER. You continue to——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ [continuing]. If we are not on time——

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Spew disinformation.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. You have gone on TV——

Chairman COMER. You have dispelled——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ [continuing]. And said the President did something. You are doing stuff——

Chairman COMER [continuing]. You dispelled an investigation of public——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ [continuing]. With your brother. The American public have the same question.

Chairman COMER [continuing]. Corruption.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Why should they believe you? Why should they believe you?

Chairman COMER. You are not going to investigate——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Why should they believe you?

Chairman COMER [continuing]. What you believe you want to do.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. There is a different rule for the President? There is a different rule for you?

Chairman COMER. You can investigate anything you want.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Why should they believe what you are saying, Mr. Chairman? Why? You go on Fox News and say loans and deals are a way to evade taxes.

Chairman COMER. You go on Fox News——

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. We do not know if that is what you are doing or not. We do not know. We have no idea. We are supposed to take your word for it, but when the President said something, you have——

Chairman COMER. Well, you have already been proven a liar, Mr. Moskowitz.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. What is that?

Chairman COMER. You have already been proven a liar.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Who has proven me a liar? You?

Chairman COMER. Yes.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. You have proven me nothing, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman COMER. Go to my hometown. There is a camera crew there today—an opposition research crew there today.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Mr. Chairman, this seems to have gotten under your——

Chairman COMER. You are more than welcome.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. It seems to have gotten under your skin.

Chairman COMER. I will pay for your ticket.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I think the American people have lots of questions, Mr. Chairman, and perhaps you should sit maybe for a deposition because this is what happens.

Chairman COMER. I will be happy. I will sit with Hunter Biden and Jim Biden and we can go over our LLCs.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. That will be great. I will make sure the Ranking Member—

Chairman COMER. Let us do that, let us do that. Let us be transparent.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ [continuing]. Is happy that you will sit at a table.

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman, I make a point of order that we should return to regular order for the benefit of the other Members who are—

Chairman COMER. The Ranking Member makes a good point.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I reclaim my time, Mr. Chairman. I will wrap it up quickly. All I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is you may have done nothing wrong.

Chairman COMER. But you tweeted that I did.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I am reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman. There is a story out there, right, because we believe everything in the media, like when you go on Fox News and say things and everyone says that they are true with innuendos and ifs and maybe the Biden family, the crime family, all this nonsense, but when it happens to you, it is fake news. And what I am saying is there should be the same—

Chairman COMER. So, you admit it, it is fake news. Thank you.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. No. I am reclaiming my time, Mr. Chairman. There should be the same standard. You said at the beginning of this hearing the Biden Administration cannot have it both ways. Neither can you, Mr. Chairman. I yield my time back. Thank you.

Chairman COMER. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Tlaib.

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much. Administrator, I actually have questions for you. Climate crisis is a huge issue for my residents and constituents back home. I actually grew up in a neighborhood where I thought that smell and that amount of pollution was normal. And you know, we are now seeing every month passes, you know, new “hottest month on record,” even this just past summer. So, the horrifying truth is that our cost on climate crisis is only getting worse, no matter how much my colleagues try to ignore it.

Administrator, I understand that as of last year, the GSA reduced greenhouse gas emissions from its real estate portfolio, I think, by almost 60 percent compared to 2008 levels. Can you talk about that and what steps you all took in reaching that goal?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. Thanks for that question. You know, the good news is today, there are so many more technologies and efficiencies that we can put into our buildings that have a huge impact. So, I always talk about it as a triple win—it is a thing that is creating jobs in America. It is reducing costs because we are making buildings more efficient, which means lower energy costs, which means lower cost to taxpayers, and we are helping the climate. And so that is the sort of magic moment that we are living in right now. We hold properties for a long time, so it is not—

Ms. TLAIB. Are we the largest property owners in the United States?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. Yes.

Ms. TLAIB. Okay.

Ms. CARNAHAN. And so, we hold properties for a long time, so it is a little bit different than you think if you are at home and thinking do I put solar on the roof, do I do my windows because what would the payback be. For the government, we hold buildings for a long time, so it makes sense for us to make these investments today. And when we do, it has an impact reducing greenhouse gases, but also saving money.

Ms. TLAIB. We know this all makes sense for our health and everything that you talked about, economy. But you know, for my residents, it has always been about their public health and our planet that we all live in. But you can also tell us if this is also fiscally, you know, prudent. I mean, this is saving money, especially when a lot of my colleagues, you know, want to ignore the fact that this is actually increasing the cost on Americans across every corner of each of our districts when we do not address this issue. Can you talk a little bit more about, again, to kind of address folks that think we are spending, we are not only spending, when I know from reading and knowing what you all been able to do, it actually has saved money for Americans?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes, we are saving money all the time. I want to give a little story about a building in Oklahoma City. It is a Federal building there that was put up after the last one was destroyed, so it was a relatively new courthouse, but we did a deep energy retrofit there, and when we did, it reduced consumption by 40 percent. We put solar on the roof, and that meant the whole building can be run by solar. We put big batteries in, and that meant that the grid, Oklahoma Gas and Electric, can actually tap into that battery source, so we cut costs by half and made the grid more resilient. That is what being a good neighbor is about and what we can do with these Federal facilities.

Ms. TLAIB. Yes. And according to analysis I read, ICF Climate Center says fleet electrification, for instance, could save the Federal Government about \$6 billion over the next 15 years, surpassing additional \$4.6 billion it would cost to actually purchase those vehicles. So, it is really important. Briefly, what are some of the other ways General Services Administration (GSA) is combating the climate crisis that you did not talk about? I love the Oklahoma model, but anything else that you all might be doing.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. Just last week, we announced that we were investing about \$2 billion across the country in 150 projects that will do a lot to reduce energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We received some money in the Inflation Reduction Act for what is called low-embodied carbon building materials. The U.S. Government and government, writ large, are some of the biggest buyers of building materials. So, if in the chain of production, we can reduce emissions, that has a huge impact. So, things might seem mundane, but it turns out to be a really big deal—concrete, asphalt, glass, and steel—and if you can reduce emissions in the production of that, it has a huge impact on reducing greenhouse gases.

And the greatest thing, I know I am using a lot of your time, is I was out at a concrete manufacturing facility outside of Kansas City, went to Topeka to make this announcement. And they are embedding carbon in concrete, 30 percent reduction straight up of greenhouse gases, and guess what? No extra cost. So, this stuff makes sense and that is what is so exciting about.

Ms. TLAIB. Really, I think my colleagues need to hear that. I mean, they continue to say it is too expensive, but failing to act, I think is more expensive, not only in our public health, but even the cost of American jobs. It really does create jobs and just a future for many of our grandchildren and great grandchildren. Thank you so much. I yield.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back. And without objection, Representative Ivey from Maryland is waved on to the Committee for the purpose of questioning the witness at today's hearing.

Mr. IVEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity. Madam Administrator, good afternoon. I apologize for getting here so late, but we had a hearing next door, but I did want to come by because it turned out, apparently, the site selection for the FBI headquarters became an issue here at the hearing, and I wanted to have a chance to ask you a few questions. There has been quite a bit of public discussion about it, but part of it centered around the FBI director sending a letter that raised questions about the selection process at the 11th hour, and also, essentially, accused of a public servant of being engaged in a conflict of interest. I wanted to get your thoughts on that and your reaction to it.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, thanks. We have talked about that quite a bit today, and I am proud of the work that our team did on that. It was inevitable that someone was going to be disappointed between two states that were working very hard to land this facility.

What I have said from the beginning is that what was most important to me is that we have a fair and transparent process for making this decision, that everybody can see how it was made, the rationale behind it, and to decide on their own whether they think it was a legitimate decision. We put hundreds of documents online, including the site selection authority's final decision, and I just encourage everybody to take a look at it. It is a 40-page document. It is well-reasoned. It followed our process. And I am fully confident in the decision they made, and now it is our job to build a facility that is worthy of the FBI.

Mr. IVEY. Just to ask you specifically about the conflict of interest allegation, what is your view on that? Do you believe there was a conflict of interest, or did the Agency take steps, did the Administration take steps to make sure that was not the case?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. No, sir. There was no conflict of interest. We understood that our PBS Commissioner's former employer was WMATA. We knew that in the beginning. We made sure to fully vet the appropriateness of her participating in the FBI selection and site selection at that time, so two years ago. So fully vetted, number one. Number two, after receiving a letter from Director Wray, I went back to my general counsel's office and said I want you to look into these concerns that have been raised and make sure we did the right thing, that we followed the process, that all

was well. And my general counsel returned and said none of these have merit. You should be fully confident that the process was followed and that there was no conflict of interest.

Mr. IVEY. I also wanted to ask you about next steps. Now that the site selection has been made, what are the next steps that GSA will take to make sure that this moves forward expeditiously?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, Congress has been very clear with us that they wanted us to make a site selection and do that expeditiously, and so the next step for us will be developing a prospectus that will come back to Congress with.

Mr. IVEY. How long do you think that will take?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I cannot say for sure. I know that there was some language, I think, that said 180 days in one of the bills. That is a very, very robust timeline that I am not sure is realistic given the size and scope of this project, but know that we are very focused on moving forward.

Mr. IVEY. Robust sounds good to me, and I did want to ask you this as well. Is there information that you need from either the FBI, the Department of Justice, or both, in order to move forward with the prospectus stage?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, thank you for that question because we are not going to build a building without the support and interest of the FBI at heart. Their mission is what this is all about, and so they need to describe what that is for the facility going forward. So, we will need to be collaborating.

Mr. IVEY. All right. And when will that get on track?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I hope very soon. I am hopeful that the project teams are speaking even now.

Mr. IVEY. And I know there have been objections that were raised and suggestions about an IG investigation and the like. But my hope is that this prospectus stage will move forward, whether it has got to be on a separate track or not, but it needs to move forward expeditiously, I believe. They need to get out of the building that they are currently in, in part because in some ways it is falling down and also, I think, delay adds to costs, but I would like to hear your thoughts on that.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, just as a general matter, delay does add a lot to cost. This particular project has been, you know, discussed, you probably know better than I do, but I think 15 years. So, there is a mission need for the FBI to have a new facility to be able to really deliver the security and the work that they do for the American people, so we have that very clear in our focus.

Mr. IVEY. All right. Your expectation is you will be able to work with the FBI and the Department of Justice, well, frankly immediately, I guess, in beginning that process?

Ms. CARNAHAN. I am hopeful, but again, this is not a thing that I am involved in every day, but the project teams, I am hopeful, can move things ahead.

Mr. IVEY. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Sessions from Texas for 5 minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Administrator Carnahan, welcome. I know you have been here for a good bit of the day, and thank you very much.

Administrator, *Login.gov* was built by 18F. You joined 18F in February 2016. In October 2016, the GSA Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a report describing how 18F did not follow a number of rules and procedures, including those related to procurement and security. Then in March 2023, when you were GSA Administrator, the GSA OIG issued another report describing how *Login.gov* misled, and the word “lied to” was included in that report, customers regarding the services it provided.

You were part of 18F between 2016 and 2020 in a senior role. In the March 2023 OIG report, the Commissioner of Federal Acquisition Service, which includes 18F and the broader Technology Transformation Services (TTS), stated, “TTS’s failure to perform adequate oversight of 18F is rooted in its historic 18F culture that considered oversight burdensome.” We held hearings earlier in the year on 18F on a bipartisan basis, and, in fact, I had an amendment that was accepted last week on the Floor to defund completely 18F.

You have spoken today about the successes related to the project of the GSA. Can you go back and tell us about 18F and your viewpoint about 18F as it relates to these OIG reports in relationship to our history of holding a hearing that was bipartisan condemnation of 18F and their relevance to misleading the government, including the IRS about the viability and visibility of those people who came in through *Login.gov*?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, thanks for the question, Congressman. I want to bifurcate it a little bit, if that is okay with you. So 18F, just to give a little bit of a history, is a technology team that is inside a group called the Technology Transformation Service at GSA—

Mr. SESSIONS. Right.

Ms. CARNAHAN [continuing]. That has hundreds of people in it, and they are doing great work for the American people.

Mr. SESSIONS. It was started by President Obama as an experiment. Is that correct?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So I was not there at the very beginning, but I do know that after the *healthcare.gov* mess, like, we can all call it that, where the technology did not work, I think President Obama at that time understood that policy does not get done if you cannot deliver it, and delivery today needs to be technology. So, there were lots more technologists that were brought into the government at that time. I joined, I think, actually in January. What did you say, 2015?

Mr. SESSIONS. You joined in February 2016, is what I—

Ms. CARNAHAN. Okay, 2016.

Mr. SESSIONS [continuing]. Have been provided.

Ms. CARNAHAN. All right. That may be right. Time is illusion nowadays. But I was there for a year during the Obama Administration and several years of the Trump Administration as well, and I focused on state and local government primarily because that is my background. What I found when I was an elected official in my home state is that too often you are reinventing the wheel all over again.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes, ma’am. But let us go to the subject of that, and that is that it would be considered if it were not government

a complete fraud, a fraudulent operation that operated outside the scope of its own laws and its own responsibilities. Can you go to that point or are you going to try and talk about working around the issue rather than going to the answer? I want to know about 18F, about the way they operated, about the way they misled and lied to the government about what their performance would be, what they could be counted on, including biometric data, and up to and including taking over \$10 million to operate this fraudulent operation. Well, I want to know what you think about that.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Well, look, my job is to make government work better for the American people and save money doing it, so that is what I am continuing to try to focus on.

Mr. SESSIONS. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Well, Mr. Chairman, this is something that is why we held this hearing and why on a bipartisan basis there was complete agreement that we should defund that organization on a moving-forward basis. Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time, and I want to thank the gentlewoman for being here today.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Timmons from South Carolina.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the last four years, the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, affectionately known as MODCOM, worked to make the government more efficient, effective, and transparent for the American people. Our Committee held dozens of hearings with various government agencies. We made 202 recommendations, but I want to focus on one particular recommendation that has the potential to save taxpayers tens of billions of dollars.

Recommendation 136 states that the GAO shall submit a report annually on the estimated cost savings of its unimplemented recommendations. As we worked to implement all the recommendations, my colleague, Representative Derek Kilmer, and I introduced H.R. 7331, the Improving Government for America's Taxpayers Act, which was signed into law at the end of last year. Our bill codified the recommendation made by the Modernization Committee, and now GAO does in fact submit a report annually on the estimated cost savings of its unimplemented recommendations. That is my intro to their most recent report.

The GAO discussed the GSA's performance in carrying out the Federal Assets and Sales Act of 2016. This bill was passed by Congress to help reduce the cost of Federal real property and address the challenges of disposing of unneeded Federal property. And in doing so, the bill established a three-round process to reduce the Federal Government's inventory of Federal civilian real property. And in its 2023 report, the GAO stated that GSA faced numerous setbacks during the first two rounds, resulting in an almost two-year delay in selling any of the properties approved for disposal during the first round. What is also troubling is that GAO states in their annual report that GSA has not developed a process that fully leverages lessons learned from the implementation of the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act. So that is the big intro.

Administrator Carnahan, it took over two years for the GSA to dispose of the ten of the 12 properties identified in the first round. What were the proceeds from this round compared to estimates?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I am going to need to circle back on that. I can talk generally about Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act (FASTA) and the work that we do together, but I do not have those specific numbers in front of me.

Ms. CARNAHAN. The idea that we can save money by consolidating and disposing of real estate, I could not agree with you more. I think we are in this really unique moment where we can both get out of leased space, which is very expensive, and cut that dramatically. Listen to this, 45 percent of our leases, government-wide, are up for renewal in the next five years.

Mr. TIMMONS. That is good news.

Ms. CARNAHAN. That means we ought to be able to move people out of that into owned space and have occupancy go up—

Mr. TIMMONS. So, I guess the answer to my question, I think, is the proceeds totaled \$194 million, but the estimate was supposed to be \$419 million. We can follow up on that and circle back. So, what processes did the GSA implement during the second round to bring additional efficiencies to this process? Maybe you do not have that offhand. Did you learn from the first process that did not seem to go that well?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, I know that the team has taken lessons from that, and I apologize that I do not know all of those as we sit here, but I will certainly circle back with the team.

Ms. CARNAHAN. I will tell you just, again, we are in violent agreement on the need to shrink real estate assets and optimize. What I want to do is work with the Committee to figure out how to get blockers out of way to do that faster.

Mr. TIMMONS. Well, whatever we can do to help you to reduce the inefficiencies with all of our leases, and, I mean, the occupancy percentages is very concerning. I guess really, I would just ask you to learn from the first round and try to get some lessons learned and then implement those for the second set to third round.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Can I just say that that is not the only way we dispose of buildings? Just last week we announced 23 assets around the country that we plan to dispose of to start the process of disposal, and it is going to save over a billion dollars and cut our real estate footprint by 3.5 million square feet.

Mr. TIMMONS. And how do you assess what properties are going to be underutilized or unneeded, and what can we do to help streamline that so we are not resigning leases that you may want to get out of, but you have some bureaucratic red tape in the way? What can we do to help?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. So, I have talked about this today. There is a thing called the Federal Buildings Fund, and it was established by Congress back in the 1970s. And the idea was that rent that was paid by agencies goes into the fund, the leases are paid out of that, and then property that is maintained by the government uses that fund to maintain. That money has been siphoned off every year for the past 12 years at about a billion dollars a year, which means we have got deferred maintenance and we have things we cannot do. So, the number one thing that we could do to speed up this process is have predictability in our Federal Buildings Fund. We are not asking for more money. We are asking for the money that is supposed to be there for Federal buildings.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you. I would just ask you to use us to try to hold these agencies accountable and to pressure them to consolidate wherever is possible, and with that, Mr. Chairman, thank you. I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. LaTurner from Kansas for 5 minutes.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Carnahan, thank you for being here. I grew up in a small town in Southeast Kansas, Galena, Kansas, town of about 3,000 people, about 5 minutes away from Joplin, Missouri. I was in the Joplin media market, so I have long been aware of you and your family's impressive legacy in Missouri politics. I appreciate you being with us here today.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Thank you. I was just in Topeka last week.

Mr. LATURNER. Were you? Well, that is where I live. The COVID-19 pandemic is long over. Kansans across my state returned to in-person work nearly three years ago, yet a majority of taxpayer-funded bureaucrats in our Federal Government are still working from home. To make matters worse, the General Services Administration continues to sign leases for empty office buildings. All the while, my constituents wait weeks on end to hear back from agencies on issues ranging from tax returns to veterans' benefits. Not only has teleworking been proven to be bad for productivity and quality of service, but multiple studies since 2020 have shown that remote employees have relatively higher rates of depression and anxiety when compared to their in-office counterparts. Simply put, Federal agencies' post-pandemic telework policies do not serve their employees and are a raw deal for taxpayers. It is past time for Federal Government to join hardworking Americans across our country and return to work in-person.

Now, Ms. Carnahan, you have somewhere around 12,000 employees.

Ms. CARNAHAN. Right.

Mr. LATURNER. What percentage of your employees are in-person as opposed to work from home?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. So, GSA has actually leaned in to telework for 20 years through lots of administrations, and what we found is that we can increase productivity and we can save money by reducing our real estate footprint, but it really depends on the job. So, some jobs require people to come in every day. If you are a building manager, you have got to be in a building. You are running a building. If you are a project manager, you do not need to be in an office. You need to be on the project job site to make sure the things are getting done. If you are an acquisition person, you might be embedded with the team at the Army or whoever that you are helping.

So, we have lots of different job classifications. And so, there are some that are also fully remote, particularly technology teams, because what we found is that we can get more talent if we can get them spread out all over the country. So, it really for us depends on the job.

Mr. LATURNER. What are the numbers on that, though?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Most people are required to come into the office at least some, but there are about 40 percent that are fully remote at GSA, and as I said, we have been doing this for 20 years.

Mr. LATURNER. Let me ask it another way. What percentage of employees are full time in person?

Ms. CARNAHAN. So, if somewhere over 40 percent are fully remote, that would leave the rest that—

Mr. LATURNER. Well, but you said some are hybrid, so I am wondering what percentage are fully in-person?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Like, how many are building managers that show up in buildings every day?

Mr. LATURNER. How many of your 12,000 employees show up to work every day in a government office?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Right. People are working every day, but they might be working in other locations, so I will have to get you the numbers on how many are actually onsite in an office of GSA every day.

Mr. LATURNER. We have to balance equities here. Like, I fully understand the point of sometimes it makes sense for folks to work from home. My contention, though, is that when you have backlogs, for my constituents to get information from their government, we are paying for office space for these folks to show up to work every day, they ought to be showing up to do their job. Do you have a comment on what I mentioned? Because I think, me, like a lot of folks, when the pandemic first happened, we thought, oh wow, we have all these new tools that were quickly developed so folks can work from home, do a hybrid, and maybe that makes more sense.

But we have seen a lot of research that shows that it is not good for our mental health. We are social beings. We need to interact with folks. And as far as my constituents are concerned, if we are paying for office space for folks to show up, they ought to show up. Do you have a comment on that?

Ms. CARNAHAN. Yes. Look, again, I cannot speak to what other agencies do and what their missions are, but I can speak to how this has worked at GSA, and we have increased sales volume in the last three years during the pandemic by 38 percent. So, more work has been done, 38 percent more, and we have customer satisfaction scores that have continued to be steady or go up over that time. And so, I appreciate that there are some agencies who are more customer facing, public facing than GSA, but for our mission, I am proud of the work that our team has done. And we are going to continue to be very intentional about how we use our telework policies to get the most productivity out of our team.

Mr. LATURNER. I look forward to getting those numbers from you or your staff. Thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

Chairman COMER. The gentleman yields back, and that concludes our questions. Now I will yield to the Ranking Member for her closing statement.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to, once again, thank Ms. Carnahan for appearing before the Committee today, making herself available for the second time.

Before we gavel out, it is essential that we highlight the need to fund the Federal Government, which includes critical funding for GSA. In just a few days, government funding will lapse, and many of the services the Federal Government provides to our constituents and to this Nation will come to a halt. More than seven million moms and children will lose critical nutrition supplements

through WIC, including more than 11,000 people in the District of Columbia alone. More than 1.3 million active-duty service members will have to go without pay, including another 11,000 people in the District of Columbia. Let us make sure to do our job and adequately fund this government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman COMER. The gentlelady yields back, and I want to conclude by again thanking Ms. Carnahan for being here. And just reiterate, the purpose of this hearing is to try to save money, and that is what the House Oversight Committee's purpose is, to investigate waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement in the Federal Government.

We are going to spend nearly \$2 trillion more this year than we take in in tax revenue. That is not sustainable. That is the root of a lot of our problems that my friends on the other side of the aisle referenced with respect to the challenges getting to 218 votes in a spending bill. We spend too much money in Washington, and what we want to do on this Committee is find ways to save, and there is an obvious way to save money in the Federal Government. We have too much office space.

Now with the Biden Administration's push for telework, we have even more office space, and even the Mayor of Washington, D.C., Mayor Bowser, supports our efforts to, number one, get people back to work, get the Federal employees to actually go back to work to improve productivity. But again, you know, that is not a priority for the Biden Administration, but what is a priority for this Committee is to get the backs of the American taxpayer.

And we want to work with your office to try to come up with ways to save substantial sums of money. And I think it would be in the best interest of the District of Columbia, as the mayor has pointed out, to utilize some of this empty office space building that has had such a detrimental effect on downtown retailers and small businesses, many minority-owned businesses, as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle pointed out.

So, we have got to get serious about saving money, eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse, and I think this was a very productive hearing. Obviously, we are going to do the requested bipartisan IG report on the site selection. You know, it just seems like everything that the FBI touches has a bit of a stench to it these days. And we want to make sure that at the end of the day, somebody in this town gets the backs of the American taxpayer. And the one entity that I believe is making an effort to do that is the House Oversight Committee, thanks to this side of the House. So again, Administrator, thank you for being here.

And in closing, I think that there is a lot of opportunity moving forward to save money for the American taxpayers and to find better utilization of all of this empty office space that the taxpayers are still having to maintain, even though the Federal workers are not going there and do not appear to ever return, at this rate, to many of those empty office buildings in this town.

So, with that, and without objection, all Members will have five legislative days within which to submit materials and to submit additional written questions for the witness, which will be forwarded to the witness for her response.

Chairman COMER. If there is no further business, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned. Thank you.
[Whereupon, at 1:29 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

