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Statement of
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Before the
Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security
House Committee on Government Operations
on
H.R. 6005 The Congressional Reports
Elimination Act of 1982



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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee

We are pleased to be here today to discuss H.R. 6005, the proposed bill to discontinue or amend certain requirements for agency reports to the Congress. At the present time there are approximately 2900 congressionally mandated recurring reporting requirements. This bill would eliminate or modify about 200 mandated reporting requirements, thereby decreasing the workload and cost of government operations. The number of requirements cited for elimination in H.R. 6005 represents about 7 percent of the existing universe of requirements. OMB estimates the passage of this bill will save the Government over \$10 million each year.

Reports reduction has been and continues to be an important area of concern to the General Accounting Office. Accordingly,

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we strongly support efforts directed at reducing unnecessary paperwork in the Federal Government and endorse the enactment of a reports reduction bill. There are several specific reporting requirements covered by this bill that we believe need to be modified. We are providing detailed information on these in a letter to your Committee. In addition, we have provided you with information identifying committees with jurisdiction over the reporting requirements named in the bill for your use in reviewing these requirements with them.

As I indicated, reports reduction is an important area of concern to us. The Congressional Budget Act of 1974 assigned the Comptroller General responsibility for monitoring the various reporting requirements of the Congress and committees and making recommendations for the elimination of any duplicative or unneeded reporting requirements. In order to fulfill this mandate we have compiled and maintain a comprehensive inventory of reporting requirements and make it available to the Congress through our Congressional Sourcebook Series and the Congressional Research Service's SCORPIO system.

This inventory work shows that the number of reporting requirements has grown dramatically in recent times. While GAO has worked with your committee in efforts to reduce unneeded or duplicative reporting requirements, progress has not been easy. As you know, on July 24, 1980, we testified before this committee on a similar bill, H.R. 6686. That bill, the result of efforts by GAO and OMB, was signed into law as the Congressional Reports Elimination Act of 1980 (P.L. 96-470). This legislation resulted

in significant cost savings and paperwork reduction to the Government.

We believe that if the utility of congressional reports were monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis, the Congress could more easily identify unneeded reports that should be eliminated. We also believe that the value of reporting requirements should be assessed during the legislative initiation and reauthorization processes. That is, drafters of legislation should compare the potential benefit of a new reporting requirement with the increased paperwork and the related cost that would be generated by the requirement. In our report entitled, "A Systematic Management Approach is Needed For Congressional Reporting Requirements" (PAD-82-12), we recommended a management approach to reporting requirements which would facilitate monitoring and evaluation. This approach would also encourage drafters of legislation to use the inventory of reporting requirements to determine what information already is available in order to avoid unnecessary creation of new requirements.

This concludes my prepared statement. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

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