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**Comptroller General
of the United States**

**United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548**

GAO Moves Up In “Best Places to Work” Rankings

WASHINGTON (April 19, 2007) – David M. Walker, Comptroller General of the United States and head of the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), welcomed today’s announcement that the GAO has moved up in the “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government” rankings.

GAO ranks second among large federal agencies this year, up from 4th overall in 2005, according to the Partnership for Public Service and American University’s Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation.

“This ranking serves to demonstrate the outstanding commitment that GAO’s employees have to serving the Congress and the American people,” Walker said. “Our ranking is especially rewarding since it comes after a major GAO transformation effort that, while challenging, has produced outstanding results for the Congress and the country.”

Walker continued: “Many federal agencies are trying to improve their human capital practices to attract, reward and retain talented workers. However, many current federal personnel policies and practices date back to the 1940s and 1950s and are in need of fundamental reforms.

“GAO is seeking to lead by example in this area, and we’ve completed a broad range of human capital reforms during the past several years. These have included both legislative changes and administrative actions.

“Today, GAO employees’ classification and compensation are more directly tied to their skills, knowledge and performance in light of market-based pay practices. I’m pleased to say that GAO is one of the first, if not the first, major federal agency to successfully move off the General Schedule classification and pay system for its permanent employees on an agency-wide basis.

“We’ve also adopted a number of innovative practices, such as flexible work schedules and telecommuting, to help GAO employees better balance the demands of work and home. GAO has also made it a priority to recruit aggressively at select colleges and universities and to help employees with their related student loans. Thanks to these and other efforts, GAO has been able to attract and retain a first-

class workforce, one that is second to none in knowledge, skills, and commitment to excellence.

“Another part of our human capital reform effort involves employee empowerment initiatives. For example, we’ve instituted annual electronic employee feedback surveys on key issues. We’ve also established an Employee Advisory Council to advise top management on attitudes, concerns, and suggestions from rank-and-file employees.

“Not all of our human capital changes have been easy—or without some controversy. Obviously, reforms that affect an employee’s pay and job classification tend to be particularly controversial. This is especially true in a workforce like GAO’s, which is highly educated and, by training, highly skeptical. Even so, the overall result of GAO’s many human capital initiatives over the past several years has been improved agency performance, greater employee job satisfaction, and more effective use of GAO’s resources.

“Today’s announcement serves to demonstrate that transforming how the government does business is possible, and that such an effort can be accomplished while maintaining high levels of employee satisfaction.

“Thanks to the Partnership for Public Service and American University for their continued sponsorship of the ‘Best Places to Work’ initiative.”

For additional information, call GAO’s Office of Public Affairs at 202-512-4800.