

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

February 15, 2011

The Honorable Darrell Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight & Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Daniel E. Lungren
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Bldg.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Issa and Chairman Lungren:

In accordance with the requirements of clause 2 of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following is a list of oversight hearings and oversight-related activities that the Committee on Ways and Means and its Subcommittees plan to conduct during the 112th Congress.

Matters under the Committee's Federal Budget Jurisdiction:

- **Economic and Budget Outlook.** Oversight hearings with various Administration officials to discuss current economic and budget conditions, including the long-term outlook, the state of the economy, prospects for recovery and long-term growth, our economic competitiveness, private sector job creation, and limits on the public debt.

Matters under the Committee's Tax Jurisdiction:

- **Tax Reform.** Hearings on simplifying and reforming the tax code for individuals, families, and employers in order to better promote economic growth and job creation.
- **Priorities of the Department of the Treasury.** Hearings with the Treasury Secretary and other Administration officials to receive information regarding the Administration's tax-related priorities for the 112th Congress. Specifically, discuss and consider legislative

and administrative proposals contained in the President's fiscal year 2012 and 2013 budgets.

- **Appropriate Tax Relief for Individuals, Families, and Employers.** Hearings on appropriate tax relief measures for individual taxpayers, families, and employers of all sizes.
- **Internal Revenue Service Operations/Administration of Tax Laws.** Oversight of the major Internal Revenue Service programs, including enforcement, collection, taxpayer services, returns processing, and information systems. Consider analyses and reports provided to the Congress by the IRS National Taxpayer Advocate, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, and the GAO. Oversight of IRS funding and staffing levels needed to provide taxpayer assistance and enforce the tax law fairly, effectively and efficiently. Evaluate tax return filing seasons, including use of paid tax preparers, electronic filing, IRS and volunteer taxpayer assistance programs, and the Free File Program. Discuss proposed funding and staffing levels for the IRS and legislative proposals and administrative proposals contained in the President's fiscal year 2012 and 2013 budgets. Review IRS realignment and closure of service centers and other facilities.
- **Delivery of Tax Refunds.** Oversight related to the delivery of Federal tax refunds via the use of debit cards to assist individuals who do not have access to financial accounts or institutions.
- **Tax-Exempt Organizations.** Oversight of Federal tax laws, regulations, and filing requirements that affect tax-exempt organizations, particularly charities and foundations. Evaluate overall IRS efforts to monitor tax-exempt organizations, identify areas of non-compliance, prevent abuse, and ensure timely disclosure to the public about tax-exempt organization activities and finances.
- **Tax Code and Tax Form Simplification.** Oversight of tax code and tax form complexity, particularly for individuals, with the goal of simplification. Review areas where taxpayers and professional return preparers have difficulty, including areas where they make the most errors, and consider solutions. Evaluate simplification of information returns to assist taxpayers in determining taxable income. Examine proposals to close the "tax gap" by simplifying compliance with our tax laws.

- **Earned Income Tax Credit (“EITC”)**. Oversight of IRS programs designed to provide tax assistance to more than 23 million low-income working taxpayers claiming the EITC. Evaluate the participation and error rates within the program.
- **Tax Scams**. Oversight of the latest tax scams and tax fraud activities with a goal of protecting taxpayers and preventing identity theft.
- **Federal Excise Taxes**. Oversight review of Federal excise taxes, credits, and refunds, including the trust funds financed by these taxes.
- **Pensions and Retirement Security**. Oversight review of the financial condition, operations, and governance of the Pension Benefit Corporation (“PBGC”), including financial exposure of the PBGC.

Matters under the Committee’s Health Jurisdiction:

- **Priorities of the Department of Health and Human Services**. Oversight hearing with the Health and Human Services Secretary to discuss priorities for the 112th Congress and concerns related to the delivery of health services and reimbursement under Medicare. Specifically, discuss and consider legislative and administrative proposals contained in the President’s fiscal year 2012 and 2013 budgets.
- **Medicare Part A and Part B (Fee-for-Service Providers)**. Oversight of the major Medicare programs to ensure efficient use of resources, quality of care, and access to providers for Medicare beneficiaries. Specific topics include: adequacy and appropriateness of provider reimbursements, including incentive payments; program benefits; cost sharing; workforce supply; the doctor-patient relationship; treatment of specific populations such as people with disabilities and low-income beneficiaries; quality improvement efforts; implementation of recently enacted Medicare legislation and regulations; and waste, fraud, and abuse activities.
- **Medicare Advantage**. Oversight of Medicare health plans, including: enrollment; reimbursements; benefit packages; quality; beneficiary choice; and recent statutory and regulatory changes affecting Medicare health plans and their enrollees.
- **Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Plans)**. Oversight of the Medicare prescription drug program, including: drug pricing; beneficiary premiums and cost-sharing; beneficiary choice; impacts of recently enacted legislation and regulations and their impact on the Part D program; and access to retiree prescription drug coverage.

- **Medicare Entitlement.** Oversight of program changes on the Medicare Trust Funds; premium and copay levels; and benefit design.
- **CMS Administration.** Oversight of CMS, including issuance of regulations and their impact on Medicare providers and beneficiaries; the adequacy and use of CMS' budget and staff; contracting activities; communications with beneficiaries; adherence to the Administrative Procedures Act; and general agency accountability.
- **Private Health Insurance Coverage.** Oversight and review of private health coverage, including: cost, access, subsidies to purchase insurance, benefit design, coverage options, pooling mechanisms, and employer-sponsored benefits; COBRA; HCTC; health savings accounts and flexible spending arrangements; options to reduce the cost of health coverage, expand coverage, and address the rate of increase in health care costs; the impact of recently enacted legislation and regulations on those with private insurance, employers, the economy, and state budgets; and adherence to the Administrative Procedures Act.

Matters under the Committee's Human Resources Jurisdiction:

- **Welfare Reform.** Review and consider proposals to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and related welfare reform programs. Examine barriers to increasing self-sufficiency among low-income families with children, and how changes to TANF and related programs may better address the needs of adult beneficiaries who face barriers to employment. Review the role that related programs such as child care and child support enforcement play in facilitating economic opportunity for low-income families.
- **Unemployment Compensation.** Provide oversight of the nation's unemployment compensation benefits and employment security systems, with a focus on reforms that could better assist beneficiaries in returning to work.
- **Child Welfare.** Provide oversight of the nation's child welfare programs, including foster care, adoption assistance, and child and family service programs under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. Review State efforts to implement new statutory and regulatory requirements under the *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act*, including providing assistance to relatives to care for children and improving the oversight of the health and educational needs of foster children. Consider proposals for reauthorizing several child welfare services programs whose authorization expires at the end of FY 2011, as well as proposals designed to improve the financing of child welfare programs and to reduce abuse and neglect of at-risk children.

- **Low–Income Disabled and Aged Individuals.** Provide oversight of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program to examine trends in the program, agency program integrity efforts, and options to reduce administrative complexities in order to target program resources to those most in need.

Matters under the Committee’s Social Security Jurisdiction:

- **Strengthening Social Security.** Examine how Social Security programs are meeting the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s beneficiaries, along with the financial challenges facing the program and proposals to strengthen Social Security.
- **Stewardship of Social Security Programs.** Provide oversight of the management and performance of Social Security programs, including their potential vulnerability to waste, fraud, and abuse, and to explore necessary legislative remedies.
- **Use of the Social Security Number (SSN).** Examine the integrity and protection of SSNs by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and, the use of SSNs and Social Security cards as identifiers and in identity theft and other fraud, along with options for change.
- **Challenges Facing the Disability Insurance (DI) Program.** Provide oversight of the DI program including: assessing the effectiveness of return to work programs, efforts to improve disability claims processing and service delivery, and examining the growth of and options to strengthen the DI program.
- **SSA’s Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure.** Assess the effectiveness of the SSA’s IT infrastructure, including its management, performance, and strategic planning for future programs and systems development.
- **Service Delivery.** Oversight of the SSA’s service to the public during a time of fiscal constraint and evolving service delivery approaches.

Matters under the Committee’s Trade Jurisdiction:

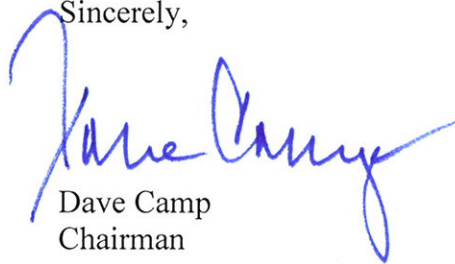
- **Signed Trade Agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea.** Oversight of the three signed and pending trade agreements, with focus on setting a clear path forward to consider all three agreements early in 2011.

- **China.** Oversight of systemic problems in U.S.-China trade relations, including issues related to China's consistent lack of protection and enforcement of U.S. intellectual property rights, indigenous innovation requirements, use of industrial subsidies, export restraints on key products such as rare earth minerals, and currency undervaluation.
- **Other Bilateral and Regional Negotiations.** Oversight of ongoing bilateral and regional negotiations including the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Evaluate prospect for additional trade and investment agreement negotiations.
- **Preference Programs.** Oversight of major U.S. trade preference programs, such as the Generalized System of Preferences, African Growth and Opportunity Act, Caribbean Basin Initiative, Andean Trade Preference Act, and Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity Through Partnership Encouragement Act. Evaluate efficacy of programs and address possible improvements.
- **World Trade Organization ("WTO").** Oversight of U.S. goals. Evaluation of reasons for the current stalemate in WTO negotiations and consideration of proposals to break impasse and achieve meaningful outcome in all areas. Oversight of accessions to the WTO, including Russia.
- **Enforcement.** Oversight of U.S. enforcement of WTO rights and rights under trade agreements. Evaluation of proposals to strengthen border enforcement related to U.S. intellectual property rights, import safety, and illegal transshipment. Oversight of administration of U.S. trade remedy laws, including border enforcement. Oversight of whether the United States is in compliance with its obligations, particularly where the United States is facing retaliation.
- **Implemented Trade Agreements.** Oversight of implemented agreements involving Peru, Central America/the Dominican Republic, Oman, Bahrain, Singapore, Chile, Australia, Morocco, Jordan, the North American Free Trade Agreement ("NAFTA"), and Israel.
- **Trade Adjustment Assistance.** Renew and provide continued oversight concerning the Trade Adjustment Assistance programs for Workers, Firms, Communities, and Farmers.
- **Priorities of U.S. Customs and Border Protection.** Oversight concerning customs revenue functions and trade facilitation, including enforcement of U.S. trade and customs laws and regulations. Consider proposals related to CBP's capacity, resources, and organizational structure to carry out its mandate.
- **Miscellaneous Tariff Bill ("MTB").** Continue work concerning noncontroversial bills to eliminate or reduce duties on products not made in sufficient quantities in the United States, in accordance with Committee guidelines and House Rules.

- **Priorities of the Office of the United States Trade Representative.** Oversight hearing with the United States Trade Representative to discuss priorities for the 112th Congress and concerns related to the international trade agenda.
- **Priorities of the United States International Trade Commission.** Oversight over the Commission concerning overall priorities and operations.

This list is not intended to be exclusive. The Committee anticipates that additional oversight hearings and activities will be scheduled as issues arise and as time permits. Also, the Committee's oversight priorities and particular concerns may change as the 112th Congress progresses over the coming two years.

Sincerely,



Dave Camp
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Sandy Levin
Ranking Member