



**Opening Statement of Chairman Sam Graves**  
**Committee on Small Business**  
**Hearing: “Entrepreneurial Assistance: Examining Inefficiencies and Duplication Across**  
**Federal Programs”**  
**March 20, 2013**

Good afternoon. Thank you all for being with us today. I call this hearing to order.

Today, America’s national debt has surpassed \$16.7 trillion and according to the Congressional Budget Office, in each of the past four years federal spending has been between \$3.5 and \$3.6 trillion. It is Congress’s duty to put our fiscal house in order, reduce spending, and stabilize our debt to ensure prosperity in our Nation for future generations.

In order to do this, we must ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely and not on overlapping, fragmented, wasteful, or duplicative federal programs. It is this Committee’s job to examine each federal program that claims to help entrepreneurs, with a specific focus on the Small Business Administration, to ensure that necessary programs remain intact while advocating for the elimination of those that are redundant or ineffective.

Unfortunately, it has become clear that the numerous entrepreneurial assistance programs run by the federal government are all engaging in similar activities with no true metrics to determine which programs are truly beneficial to entrepreneurs. Recent reports by the Government Accountability Office have identified 52 programs across four agencies aimed at helping entrepreneurs, but agencies are not adequately measuring effectiveness and collaboration among these agencies is lacking. That makes figuring out what’s helpful, what should be consolidated, and what should be cut much more difficult.

On this Committee, we understand the value of encouraging entrepreneurs and facilitating the creation of new businesses. However, I am skeptical that all 52 federal programs aimed at entrepreneurs are having a significant enough impact to justify their costs. I further question how any individual seeking to start a small business can look at 52 programs and know which one is best suited for them or how the different programs fit together. I certainly can’t imagine having the time to focus on establishing a company while navigating a disjointed maze of fragmented and overlapping federal programs. Let me be clear about this, there is an immediate need to reduce the federal budget, but even if the United States were not facing staggering debt levels, program inefficiencies would need to be eradicated to ensure entrepreneurs were receiving the best help.

Today, I hope our witnesses can shed light on some of these programs and comment on GAO’s findings, and I thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here.

I now yield to Ranking Member Velazquez for her opening remarks.