

# Reports Issued in September 1987

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# Reports Issued in September 1987

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## National Defense

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### Government Contracting: A Proposal for a Program to Study the Profitability of Government Contractors

Acc. No. 133914 (GAO/NSIAD-87-175), Sept. 17.

With government prime contract awards currently amounting to about \$200 billion a year and a significant amount of it being done with no or limited competition, concern over profits received by government contractors shows no sign of abating. With this report, GAO is providing the framework for a profit program that would require a consistent and appropriate analytical methodology to evaluate profitability, a means for systematically establishing the integrity of the studies and the reliability of contractor-furnished data, and mandatory contractor participation. Specifically, GAO is recommending legislation to require major government contractors to annually report financial results to an Administrator designated by the President. The proposed legislation also defines the criteria for determining which companies will be subject to reporting requirements.

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### Government Contracting: Selected Review of Defense Contractor Profitability

GAO/NSIAD-87-195BR, Sept. 2.

This report provides data on the profitability of specific product categories within the defense industry compared with the overall profitability of durable goods manufacturers. It assesses whether (1) the Department of Defense's interim profit policy could accomplish its intended objective of reducing overall negotiated profit objectives by 1 percent and (2) GAO's proposal for a Profitability Reporting Program is consistent in concept with title IV of S.940 introduced in the 99th Congress.

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### Antitank Weapons: Current and Future Capabilities

GAO/PEMD-87-22, Sept. 17.

In assessing the capabilities of infantry antitank weapons now in the field or under development, GAO devised a framework of several factors. These include the probability of hitting the target, probability of kill, rate of fire, sustainability of fire, and survivability of the gunner and weapon. GAO also considered three factors that can reduce effectiveness. These include the mission environment, enemy countermeasures (camouflage), and human factors (combat stress). This report reviews the threat posed by Soviet doctrine and armor, the planned U.S. infantry response, and current, upgraded, and future antitank weapons.

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**Live Fire Testing:  
Evaluating DOD's  
Programs**

GAO/PEMD-87-17, Aug. 17.

Joint Live Fire Testing is a vulnerability/lethality assessment program in which Soviet munitions are fired at combat-loaded U.S. systems. The main controversies in live fire test methodology reflect differences between the interests of proponents of full-up testing and advocates of computer modeling, resulting in largely incompatible approaches which cannot be reconciled by technical solutions alone. Full-up live fire testing is the only V/L assessment method providing direct visual observation of the damage caused by a weapon/target interaction under realistic conditions. As such, it offers a unique, important advantage over other methods.

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**Procurement:  
Assessment of DOD's  
Multiyear Contract  
Candidates**

GAO/NSIAD-87-202BR, Aug. 31.

The nine multiyear procurement candidates that the Department of Defense proposed in its FY 1988-99 budget will require about \$9.3 billion. Projected savings from these procurements depend on increased funding in the early years of the multiyear periods when compared to the annual contract funding. DOD budget submissions for the nine candidates requested an additional \$68.8 million in obligational authority for FY 1988 and an additional \$236.9 million in obligational authority for FY 1989 compared to their estimated requirements under annual procurements. Using multiyear contracts instead of annual contracts will save about \$908 million, according to DOD, but little confidence can be placed in most of these estimates. Final multiyear procurement approval is reserved until negotiated contract prices are submitted to the Congress and the proposed savings are validated.

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**Defense Budget:  
Potential Reductions to  
Missile Procurement  
Budgets**

Acc. No. 133860 (GAO/NSIAD-87-206BR), Sept. 10.

This report reviews the justifications for the Army's \$2 billion FY 1988 appropriation request for eight missile systems: Stinger, Patriot, Air Defense System-Heavy, Multiple Launch Rocket System, Army Tactical Missile System, Chaparral, TOW-2, and Hellfire. GAO identified \$169.9 million with potential for reduction—\$161.2 million for the Army, \$6.8 million for the Marine Corps, and \$1.9 million for the Navy. In addition, GAO identified \$100.1 million in potential reductions to unused FY 1986 and 1987 appropriations—\$92.8 million for the Army, \$0.7 million for the Marine Corps, and \$6.6 million for the Navy.

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**Army Budget:  
Potential Reductions to  
Aircraft Procurement  
Budgets**

GAO/NSIAD-87-204BR, Sept. 10.

GAO reviewed Army's request of about \$1.6 billion for seven helicopter systems and identified \$214.7 million in potential reductions—\$66.7 million for FY 1988, \$116.6 million for FY 1987, and \$31.4 million for FY 1986. In most cases, Army officials agreed that certain funds are potentially not needed for their budgeted purposes. However, they stated their preference that budget reductions not be made but that funds should remain available to them for other purposes.

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**Army Procurement:  
Compliance With  
Restriction on Foreign  
Products**

Acc. No. 133943 (GAO/NSIAD-87-191), Sept. 18.

The U.S. Army Troop Support Command did not follow, on two contracts, the Department of Defense's regulations for implementing the Berry Amendment—DOD Appropriations Act restriction—which prohibits the purchase of specified products from foreign sources. The two contracts were for collapsible water storage tanks constructed of coated synthetic fabric. When advised that DOD's regulations were not being followed, TROSCOM took immediate corrective action.

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**Weapon Systems:  
Effects of Army Decision  
to Reduce Helicopter  
Procurement**

GAO/NSIAD-87-207BR, Sept. 8.

The Army decided to curtail the procurement of attack, scout, and utility helicopters as reflected in the Department of Defense FY 1988 budget submitted to the Congress. The decision has two negative consequences. First, Army will have to rely for a greater period on older and less capable helicopters. Second, the cuts will lengthen the period of time during which there will be no production of attack, scout, or utility helicopters. The Army was aware of these consequences when it made the reduction decision but believes that the capabilities of the Light Helicopter Family program are worth waiting for. It sees the LHX as the centerpiece of Army aviation modernization and as the long-term response to the Soviet threat.

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**Aircraft Requirements:  
Navy's Plans to Acquire a  
New Maritime Patrol  
Aircraft**

GAO/NSIAD-87-182FS, July 17.

In November 1985 the Navy initiated a program to acquire an improved P-3C maritime patrol aircraft on a competitive basis. However, because it was unable to obtain such competition it did not have a basis for comparing the different types of aircraft that could be proposed and their

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costs. Navy also had not performed an analysis of the aircraft characteristics required. Navy will now conduct a study that would more clearly define technical requirements.

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**Battlefield Automation:  
Field Artillery Data  
Systems Acquisition  
Problems and Budget  
Impacts**

GAO/NSIAD-87-198BR, July 31.

This report monitors the Army's (1) fire support plans and (2) testing and development of the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data Systems, Light Field Artillery Tactical Data Systems, and the Fire Support Team/Digital Message Device. The AFATD program is experiencing problems that have delayed the program. The LFATDS met its design requirements in the initial operational test and evaluation, and was accepted as a "go to war" system. Army plans to use the FIST/DMD to upgrade the light divisions' fire support C2 capabilities but it does not meet any of the light divisions' 11 fire support C2 critical effectiveness requirements. Army has not made plans to use the \$25.5 million in FY 1986 funds the Congress earmarked to upgrade light divisions' near-term fire support C2 capabilities. AFATDS' software problems have delayed its development and the Congress may want to consider reducing Army's FY 1988 appropriations request by \$106.9 million.

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**Arms Exports:  
Licensing Reviews for  
Exporting Military Items  
Can Be Improved**

GAO/NSIAD-87-211, Sept. 9.

The Office of Munitions Control issues export licenses for items which are inherently military in nature, ranging from spare parts to major weapon systems. In FY 1986, OMC reported issuing licenses authorizing commercial exports valued at \$14.9 billion and approved about 90 percent of the license applications it acted on. Over 80 percent were acted on in less than a month. However, application data and information were not routinely checked for accuracy or veracity. OMC's facilities and automated capabilities are insufficient for storing and quickly retrieving historical data which would be useful in license application reviews. Its systems and procedures are not adequate to ensure compliance with some administrative and reporting requirements. Budget limitations have imposed constraints on OMC but improvements can be made in more detailed reviews of license applications and in establishing an automated system to screen them.

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**National Security:  
DOD Clearance Reduction  
and Related Issues**

Acc. No. 133942 (GAO/NSIAD-87-170BR), Sept. 18.

At the beginning of FY 1985 about 4.1 million Department of Defense civilian, military, and defense industry personnel had security clearances. A large number of these individuals had access to classified information on a continuing basis, suggesting a vulnerability to compromise such information. Also in 1985, DOD estimated that approximately 300,000 individuals with top secret clearances would be overdue for reinvestigation in 1986. DOD set goals to reduce security clearances and background investigations, and the Congress appropriated funds to reduce the reinvestigation backlog. An overview of these programs and the status of recent actions to improve information and personnel security are provided in the report.

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**Polygraph Training:  
DOD Program Meets  
Standards but Expansion  
Requires Better Planning**

Acc. No. 133941 (GAO/NSIAD-87-161), Sept. 18.

In 1984 the Department of Defense proposed expanding its use of polygraph examinations from primarily criminal investigations to include screening individuals for access to classified information in special access programs. DOD's Polygraph Institute's training program met or exceeded the requirements of most other polygraph schools, requiring its students to conduct 50 training polygraph examinations and to serve a minimum 6-month internship. However, some areas of the training program need improvement—the Institute's role in the research program is unclear; it has more polygraph instruments that it needs; it is substantially increasing the faculty, which may result in its having more instructors than necessary; and the directive governing operation of the Institute does not provide policy on whether or how much it should charge nonfederal students.

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**Inventory Management:  
Army Needs to Reduce  
Retail Level Excesses**

Acc. No. 133818 (GAO/NSIAD-87-197), Sept. 2.

Item managers at National Inventory Control Points are often unaware that items may be excess at certain locations and in short supply at other locations. This occurs primarily because item managers at the retail level do not report all of the excess items which are also being procured by the NICPs. GAO found that the value of excesses at the installation level increased from \$85.1 million to \$155.3 million from FY 1984-1986.

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**Computer Systems:  
Navy Stock Point ADP  
Replacement Program  
Needs Better Management  
Controls**

Acc. No. 133913 (GAO/IMTEC-87-30), Sept. 17.

Navy estimates that its Stock Point ADP Replacement program will cost \$2.3 billion over its 24-year life. The project is intended to improve supply operations by replacing the current system with new equipment and software incrementally at 40 stock point locations from 1987 through 1994. Navy has not complied with Defense requirements for modernization. Specifically, (1) it does not have a scheduled date for review and approval of the new system design, (2) it had not adequately quantified the performance and cost measures needed to demonstrate SPAR's operational and economic worth, and (3) its plan to move from the current system to the new SPAR system was not detailed enough to ensure a smooth transition.

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**Audit Resolution:  
Responsiveness of Defense  
Management to Internal  
Audit Recommendations**

GAO/AFMD-87-37BR, July 31.

Improvement has been noted in audit resolution systems in the Department of Defense since the establishment of the DOD Office of the Inspector General in September 1982. However, benefits which could result by implementing audit recommendations are not in audit follow-up files supporting the decisions to close the recommendations. If the recommendations are not implemented, DOD may continue to have problems and may have lost the potential savings and benefits which would result. Naval auditors have reported that 21 percent of the 103 recommendations they reviewed had been closed improperly because the required corrective actions had not been taken.

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**Military Facilities:  
Conversion to District  
Heat in Germany**

GAO/NSIAD-87-172, Aug. 31.

Under the Department of Defense's district heat conversion program, DOD buys heat for U.S. facilities from public utility heat plants in local German communities. Before conversion, U.S. facilities generated their own heat, usually by burning coal shipped from the United States. Conversion of a heating facility at a U.S. military installation in Europe to district heat or other fuel sources may be made if it is cost-effective and after notification of the Congress, followed by a waiting period of 30 days. The Army has actively pursued district heat in Germany to reduce costs and to implement the U.S. requirement to abide by German environmental standards. Army analyses comparing the costs of district heat with current operations showed it to be less expensive.



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## International Affairs

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### Financial Audit: Export-Import Bank's 1986 and 1985 Financial Statements

Acc. No. 133812 (GAO/AFMD-87-61), Aug. 31.

The Export-Import Bank's financial statements continue to be misleading because they do not reflect the material losses that have been incurred or are likely to result from the uncollectibility of a portion of its foreign loans and its estimated recoveries on claims it paid because of defaults under its insurance and guarantee programs. The bank should have established an allowance for losses as of September 1986 of between \$2.7 million and \$3.8 billion. Had the bank established such an allowance, it would have reported a deficit ranging from \$1.9 to \$3.0 billion, instead of a reserve of \$773 million.

### International Trade: Commodity Credit Corporation's Refunds of Export Guarantee Fees

GAO/NSIAD-87-185, Aug. 19.

Under the Commodity Credit Corporation's credit guarantee program, CCC enters into guarantee agreements with U.S. exporters that sell agricultural commodities on credit terms for periods up to 3 years. For protection against losses from defaults in payments by foreign banks, the exporter pays CCC a fee which is not refundable unless it is determined that a refund would be in CCC's interest. The fees, along with CCC's refund policy, are also intended to deter exporters from speculating by requiring that exporters make a sales commitment. CCC decided not to refund an export credit guarantee fee of \$27,988.80 to Gold Coast Investments of San Diego, California because the Mexican importer was unable to obtain credit from a Mexican financial institution. Unclear policy provided Gold Coast concerning circumstances that must exist to support a firm sale prompted GAO to recommend clarifying credit guarantee program regulations.

### Foreign Travel: Expenditures and Controls of the Corps of Engineers and Selected Other Agencies

GAO/GGD-87-107BR, Aug. 11.

Nonreimbursable foreign travel expenditures by civil works employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers increased from \$276,662 in 1983 to \$406,638 in 1985 and declined to \$305,373 in 1986. In FY 1986 the Corps instituted several new procedures and controls for nonroutine foreign travel. The decline in foreign travel expenditures during FY 1986

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compared to the prior 2 years is attributable to the Corps' new centralized approval procedures which were established because of concern over increases in foreign travel expenditures.

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**Foreign Aid: Improvement  
Needed in Management of  
Technical Services  
Contracts**

GAO/NSIAD-87-183, Aug. 18.

Inadequate Agency for International Development controls over centrally managed contracts have resulted in expenditures being charged to the wrong accounts. Generally AID had implemented and complied with competition requirements of current laws and regulations for contracts. Specifically, AID has not adequately monitored contractor compliance with contract terms. Project officers must follow established procedures to ensure that expenditures are charged to proper accounts, and AID needs to develop guidance to ensure that it receives information on contractor performance before it makes payment.

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**Science, Space, and  
Technology**

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**Nasa ADP Systems:  
Information on the  
Automated Mission and  
Payload Tracking System**

GAO/IMTEC-87-38FS, Sept. 1.

The Automated Mission and Payload Tracking System will provide improved automated systems support to space shuttle activities. It will eliminate data duplication among five existing systems, increase data accuracy, improve data accessibility, and provide enhanced capability not available on existing systems. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has authorized about \$1.1 million in contract task orders to develop the system.

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**Energy**

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**Nuclear Regulation:  
Efforts to Ensure Nuclear  
Power Plant Safety Can Be  
Strengthened**

GAO/RCED-87-141, Aug. 13.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission lacks guidelines to determine when nuclear plants that are having safety problems should be shut down. Hence, some plants having violations may be shut down; others with

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similar violations may not be shut down. NRC takes from several months to 10 or more years to resolve generic safety issues—potential design, construction, or operating problems affecting groups of plants. The longer the issues remain open, the longer the plants may not operate as safely as they could. Each year NRC and plant inspectors find thousands of safety violations. However, NRC headquarters does not consolidate the information to evaluate safety trends and/or determine the status of corrective actions taken by the utilities.

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**Nuclear Nonproliferation:  
Department of Energy  
Needs Tighter Controls  
Over Reprocessing  
Information**

GAO/RCED-87-150, Aug. 17.

Countries that pose a proliferation or security risk routinely obtain reprocessing information published by the Department of Energy. DOE tries to withhold some information that has trade value (applied technology) but the possibility exists that this information could be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. DOE needs to seek an exemption from that act to protect such information. DOE has transferred to other countries information appearing to meet the definition of sensitive nuclear technology. Since DOE does not believe the information is sensitive, it has not obtained the required approval rights. DOE places no restrictions on foreign nationals' involvement in its funded reprocessing research at colleges and universities. Although it now funds only five such projects, DOE could contribute to foreign expertise in this area.

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**Nuclear Waste:  
Information on Cost  
Growth in Site  
Characterization Cost  
Estimates**

GAO/RCED-87-200FS, Sept. 10.

Three sites under consideration as the nation's first repository for the permanent disposal of high-level nuclear waste are located in Deaf Smith County, Texas; on Hanford Reservation, Washington; and at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The Department of Energy's earliest estimates of site characterization costs made in 1981 were from \$180 million to \$240 million for the three sites. Since then, DOE's cost estimates have increased to \$2.2 billion in 1984 and to \$4.8 billion in its latest preliminary estimates. Two basic reasons for the increases are (1) early estimates that did not anticipate the comprehensive program DOE now believes is necessary and (2) an extension of DOE's schedule for bringing the first repository on line and additional new work plans.

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**Oil Reserve:  
Status of Strategic  
Petroleum Reserve  
Activities as of June 30,  
1987**

GAO/RCED-87-194FS, Aug. 26.

This report highlights activities of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve during the third quarter of FY 1987. They include (1) the SPR inventory totaling 527.2 million barrels of oil to which the Department of Energy added 7.2 million barrels at an average fill rate of 79,000 barrels per day; (2) DOE plans to obligate the remaining balance of its oil acquisition account; (3) results of inspections and tests for pipeline deterioration; (4) confirmation of operational problems occurring at the Weeks Island, Louisiana site; and (5) the SPR drawdown readiness exercise.

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**Electric Power:  
Rate Impacts of Utah  
Power and Light Lawsuit  
to Obtain Federal  
Hydropower**

Acc. No. 133881 (GAO/RCED-87-192), Sept. 11.

Interest has been expressed in the extent to which electric power rates might change as a result of a lawsuit filed by Utah Power and Light Company and about 156 communities it serves to obtain low-cost federal hydropower from the Western Area Power Administration. A study by an industry consulting firm, R.W. Beck and Associates highlights the potential increased cost to current federal power users. Utah highlights potential benefits. Neither provides a complete analysis of the costs and benefits to all those that could be affected. GAO believes estimating potential rate impacts at this time is speculative because factors essential to the actual rate impacts, including specifics of the court's decision and future market conditions, cannot be reliably predicted.

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**Energy Management:  
DOE Controls Over  
Contractor Expenditures  
Need Strengthening**

GAO/RCED-87-166, Aug. 28.

The Department of Energy exercises little control over its operating contractors' procurement activities. As a result, DOE has little assurance that its contractors are (1) adequately stressing competition in subcontracting; (2) reasonably protected against the occurrence of kickbacks; and (3) following federal payment procedures. New Mexico currently assesses one of DOE's operating contractors about \$34 million annually in certain taxes from which the federal government itself would be exempt. The cost to the federal government could grow to hundreds of millions of dollars a year if other states follow New Mexico's practice.

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## Natural Resources and Environment

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### Air Pollution: EPA's Efforts to Control Vehicle Refueling and Evaporative Emissions

GAO/RCED-87-151, Aug. 7.

Ozone, one of the nation's most pervasive pollution problems, is released by motor vehicles. For years, the Environmental Protection Agency has been trying to control refueling emissions and in March 1987, it submitted draft proposals that would require the (1) installation of onboard controls to reduce refueling emissions and (2) reduction of commercial gasoline volatility to control evaporative emissions. EPA favors onboard controls but this alternative is opposed primarily by the automobile industry, which cites its added cost. Commercial gasoline volatility controls could achieve emission reductions more quickly than modifying vehicle control systems but this strategy would affect the oil industry most directly because it would increase refining costs. The automobile industry would be largely unaffected by this option. EPA's draft analyses needs clarification to help in evaluating regulatory strategies for achieving the ozone standard.

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### Mineral Revenues: Coal Lease Readjustment Problems Remedied but Not All Revenue Is Collected

GAO/RCED-87-164, Aug. 25.

From 1976 to 1984, the Bureau of Land Management did not readjust 149 federal coal leases by their anniversary dates, and as a result it lost an estimated \$187 million in royalty and rent payments. In addition, in five states GAO reviewed, the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service had not collected over \$12.6 million in royalties and rent as of September 1986 because of inadequate controls over royalty and rent collection. BLM also frequently did not protect the government's financial interest in the five states by not requiring bond amounts from lessees adequate to cover revenue that accrued during the period that lease readjustments were being appealed. As of September 1986 there was \$11.9 million in unprotected revenue.

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**Mine Safety:  
Federal Efforts to Improve  
Inspections and Injury  
Reporting**

Acc. No. 133886 (GAO/HRD-87-115BR), Sept. 14.

GAO found mechanisms used by the Mine Safety and Health Administration to conduct quality mandatory regular mine inspections to be inadequate. Specifically, supervision of inspectors varied significantly as did the documentation describing inspection activities which varied significantly and was sometimes inadequate to determine inspection coverage; evaluations of inspection quality were being done in only the metal/non-metal administration of MSHA and occurred only every 3 years; and reports generated by MSHA's management information system provide no details on the quality of individual inspections. Only 1 in every 39 mines is audited each year and therefore the accuracy of reported injury data has limited effectiveness. MSHA is taking steps to alleviate these problems which should improve its quality assurance program.

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**Surface Mining:  
State and Federal Use of  
Alternative Enforcement  
Techniques**

GAO/RCED-87-160, Aug. 20.

GAO reviewed 22 primacy states to determine their use of state and federal alternative enforcement techniques ensuring that permittees adhere to federally mandated performance and environmental standards under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act. Alternative enforcement techniques include injunctions, individual civil penalties, criminal action, and suspension or revocation of the mining permit. GAO found that all 22 states have the statutory authority to use the act's alternative enforcement techniques but none of them has developed systems to ensure that all the techniques are appropriately used; when the states use alternative techniques to induce the permittee to correct unabated violations, they choose to revoke or suspend the mining permit; and thirteen of the 22 states have established a specific deadline for initiating alternative enforcement action when an operator fails to correct a violation.

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## Agriculture

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### Farm Payments: USDA's Proposed Changes to the \$50,000 Payment Limit Could Be Improved

Acc. No. 133876 (GAO/RCED-87-190), Sept. 11.

The Department of Agriculture is authorized to make direct income support payments, limited to \$50,000, to assist farmers. USDA has proposed legislative and administrative changes to reduce avoidance of the payment limit by producers participating in USDA farm programs. GAO has suggested further changes which will discourage many farm reorganizations designed to avoid the payment limitation and will reduce future government farm program payments. Congressional action on the proposed legislation is important because, although USDA can implement some of its proposals under existing legislative authority, agency officials are reluctant to make any changes until the Congress reaches a consensus on what changes USDA should make.

### Farm Programs: Analysis of Options for Targeting Payments and Crop Loans

Acc. No. 133880 (GAO/RCED-87-144), Sept. 10.

Despite sharply higher levels of federal spending on farm programs, large numbers of American farmers are in financial trouble. This seeming paradox has raised the question of whether federal spending can be reduced while program benefits are targeted to financially stressed farmers. The option for redistributing payments can be designed to reduce federal spending while increasing payments to many financially stressed farms. The options to lower the payment limit and to set crop loan limits can be expected to reduce federal spending and benefits to larger farms. This approach would neither increase nor decrease benefits to financially stressed farms. Administrative feasibility is an overriding concern. Potential changes in federal spending and other variables in GAO's analysis may be overstated. However, this report provides insights for ranking policy options and examining the order of magnitude of changes associated with the options.

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## Commerce and Housing Credit

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### ADP Acquisitions: Lessons Learned From SEC's EDGAR Pilot Test

GAO/IMTEC-87-31, Aug. 6.

In April 1984 the Securities and Exchange Commission awarded a 2-year contract for development of a pilot Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis and Retrieval system to test its feasibility of disseminating to the public the millions of pages of documents companies file with SEC each year. The pilot demonstrated the feasibility but it also disclosed key areas—automatic receipt and acceptance, data tagging, text searching, and image processing—that still require new or revised technical solutions. EDGAR can be successfully developed only if SEC has the proper technical, contractual, and managerial talent to handle a project of its size and complexity. SEC is hiring staff with these talents but it needs to have some key people in place before awarding a contract for the operational system.

### Thrift Industry: The Management Consignment Program

Acc. No. 133939 (GAO/GGD-87-115BR), Sept. 10.

The Management Consignment Program was initiated by the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation to provide a means for stemming the losses of some of the most severely troubled thrifts. The program's original objective was to provide a series of short-term management contracts for troubled thrifts until the institutions could be sold, merged, or closed. However, FSLIC's deteriorating condition has left the insurance fund without sufficient reserves to resolve these problem institutions. The institutions in the program have continued to operate despite an inability to meet minimum regulatory capital requirements, and most continue to experience both operating and nonoperating losses.

### National Postal Forum: Nonprofit Sponsor of Postal Service Meetings With Suppliers and Customers

GAO/GGD-87-113, Sept. 9.

The Postal Forum is designed to (1) promote cooperation between the Postal Service and its customers, (2) educate postal customers, and (3) provide for the display of postal-related equipment, supplies, and services. The Forum is subject to, and complies with, disclosure and accountability requirements placed on tax-exempt organizations by the



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Internal Revenue Service and the Government of the District of Columbia. The required annual tax return disclosing the Forum's revenues, expenses, and the amount of financial support provided by the Postal Service is available to the public upon request to IRS.

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Telephone  
Communications:  
Cost and Funding  
Information on Lifeline  
Telephone Service

GAO/RCED-87-189, Sept. 1.

The Federal Communications Commission established a lifeline program to provide financial assistance to certain low-income households. States with lifeline programs tie eligibility for assistance to households qualifying for welfare or having annual incomes below certain established levels. There are two basic funding alternatives for the lifeline programs: (1) general tax revenues or tax credits to telephone companies providing the services and (2) additional charges on local or toll telephone users. GAO considers the lifeline service a social program and, therefore, prefers that it be funded through general tax revenues. Others believe it is best to spread the cost of the service among all other telephone users.

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Transportation

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Aviation Weather:  
Status of FAA's New  
Hazardous Weather  
Detection and  
Dissemination Systems

GAO/RCED-87-208, Sept. 29.

The Federal Aviation Administration has a \$16 billion National Airspace System plan which includes \$1.5 billion for new weather detection and dissemination systems—the optimal ground-based wind-shear detection system Doppler weather radar and the ASR-9 radar which provides improved weather detection over that of existing airport surveillance radars. Both of the systems have unresolved technical issues that could affect their usefulness. While FAA intends to improve the timeliness of weather information dissemination, its current NAS plan states that hazardous weather information from the new detection systems will not be sent directly to pilots for at least a decade. This means that busy controllers will continue to disseminate this information.

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## Transborder Trucking: Impacts of Disparate U.S. and Canadian Policies

GAO/RCED-87-111, July 30.

Canadian provinces continue to regulate entry into the trucking industry, making it more difficult to secure operating authority in Canada than in the United States. But no evidence has been found concerning provincial regulators discriminating against U.S. applicants for operating rights or imposing on U.S. carriers any fees or standards not also required of Canadian operators. Only two instances were found which placed a greater burden on U.S. truckers than on Canadians: workman's compensation payments and the Heavy Vehicle Use Tax. American truckers have lost traffic to Canadian carriers but the decline in the value of the Canadian dollar relative to the U.S. dollar, and the shift in the balance of trade to Canada's favor account for these shifts in market share. The Canadian government and the provinces have taken steps to deregulate the trucking industry. If this continues, many of the present differences between U.S. and Canadian policy are likely to be eliminated over the next few years.

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## Housing and Community Development

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### Subsidized Housing: HUD Oversight of the Villa San Pedro Project

GAO/RCED-87-159BR, Aug. 20.

During 1979-85 the Department of Housing and Urban Development identified problems at Villa San Pedro housing project in San Jose, California, which eventually led to condemnation of more than half of its 100 apartments, and a tenant lawsuit and rent strike. In 1986, the Villa San Pedro Corporation defaulted on its mortgage, causing HUD to take it over from the lender. HUD has two main options for restoring the project—(1) sell the project or (2) release the flexible subsidy. Whether or not the project is sold, it will remain dedicated to low- and moderate-income housing until 1991, as required by an agreement that its owners signed in order to receive rental subsidies.

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## Social Services

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### Compensatory Education: Chapter 1 Services Provided to Private Sectarian School Students

GAO/HRD-87-128BR, Sept. 21.

GAO reviewed the impact in 15 school districts of the Supreme Court's July 1985 *Aguilar v. Felton* decision which held that sending public Chapter 1 teachers into private sectarian (religiously affiliated) schools to teach was unconstitutional. The 15 districts have settled on alternative service delivery methods but implementing these methods is costly and the number of private sectarian school students receiving Chapter 1 services is less than it was prior to the decision. Ten of the 15 districts spent \$9.2 million in school years 1985-86 and 1986-87 to comply with the decision. These 15 districts dropped from providing Chapter 1 services to 28,880 private sectarian school students in school year 1984-85 to 15,145 in school year 1985-86, but rose to 21,566 in school year 1986-87.

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### Welfare and Taxes: Extending Benefits and Taxes to Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa

Acc. No. 133908 (GAO/HRD-87-60), Sept. 15.

The United States provides less welfare coverage to its insular areas of Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa than it does to states. Area residents and businesses generally are exempt from federal taxes. GAO estimates that federal expenditures in the four areas would have doubled—from about \$1 to \$2 billion—had welfare programs been fully extended to them. Federal tax revenue, negligible in 1983, would have been about \$2.7 billion more. But because such changes could adversely affect local business activity, annual federal tax revenue could decline significantly over the long term as some businesses close, relocate, or down-size operations after tax incentives disappear. Nearly all area leaders strongly opposed federal income taxes, citing the likely flight of businesses and other taxpayers and depressed economies, which in turn could lead to more welfare costs and less area tax revenue.

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## Health

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### Medicare and Medicaid: Stronger Enforcement of Nursing Home Requirements Needed

GAO/HRD-87-113, July 22.

Over a third of the nursing homes participating in Medicare and/or Medicaid in November 1985 failed to meet one or more requirements considered by experts to most likely affect residents' health and safety in three or more consecutive inspections during an approximately 4-year period. Many of the skilled nursing facilities (25 percent) and intermediate care facilities (16 percent) had two or more repeat deficiencies. These were in the provision of nursing care, in facility environment, and in food services. GAO is recommending the Department of Health and Human Services strengthen its use of existing regulatory authority to deal with nursing homes having repeat deficiencies that threaten patient health and safety. It is also recommending that they be terminated from the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

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### Medicaid: Improvements Needed in Programs to Prevent Abuse

Acc. No. 133816 (GAO/HRD-87-75), Sept. 1.

Although weaknesses have previously been identified in states' postpayment utilization review programs and the Department of Health and Human Services' oversight, HHS has not taken effective action to strengthen management controls. Some states GAO reviewed were not effectively using their computerized management information systems to identify potential Medicaid abuse, and some were reviewing only a small portion of the potentially abusive recipients identified. Most states have applied sanctions against few abusive Medicaid recipients. Using different assumptions for the percentage of Medicaid recipients in control programs and annual savings per recipient, potential cost avoidance in 1985 could have ranged from \$54.5 million to over \$400 million.

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### Medicare: Legislative Amendment Would Avoid Adverse Effects on Disabled Beneficiaries

GAO/HRD-87-135, Sept. 28.

Recent legislation amended Medicare law to require certain employer-sponsored group health insurers that cover disabled beneficiaries to pay the beneficiaries' medical claims ahead of Medicare. A disagreement has arisen about whether this law applies to health plans sponsored by government employers. Amending the act to explicitly state that government-sponsored plans covering disabled beneficiaries are the primary

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payers would be consistent with other secondary payer provisions of the Social Security Act. Without legislative action, the issue might have to be resolved by the courts, raising uncertainty as to Medicare's role as secondary payer and causing delays for Medicare beneficiaries in obtaining payment for their medical expenses.

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**Prenatal Care:  
Medicaid Recipients and  
Uninsured Women Obtain  
Insufficient Care**

GAO/HRD-87-137, Sept. 30.

About 63 percent of the Medicaid recipients and uninsured women GAO interviewed in 32 communities did not begin their prenatal care early enough and/or did not return for care often enough. Three barriers predominated in virtually every demographic group of women—lack of money to pay for care, lack of transportation to the provider of care, and unawareness of pregnancy. A comprehensive effort is needed to identify the primary barriers in a community, develop programs to overcome those barriers, and evaluate their effectiveness in improving access to prenatal care. Federal funds are available to assist states and communities and money spent to expand prenatal care services should be more than offset by decreased newborn intensive-care costs.

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**Medical Research:  
National Research Service  
Awards for Research in  
Primary Medical Care**

GAO/HRD-87-20, July 31.

The National Institutes of Health implemented the first part of the Public Health Service Act which requires that 1/2 of 1 percent of money appropriated for National Research Service Awards in each of FY 1986, 1987, and 1988 be made available for research in primary medical care. This report reviews the criteria NIH used for identifying NRSAs in primary medical care and NIH documents describing 16 grants funded for \$2.1 million in FY 1986.

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**Income Security**

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**Social Security:  
More Must Be Done to  
Credit Earnings to  
Individuals' Accounts**

Acc. No. 133940 (GAO/TIRD-87-52), Sept. 18.

The Social Security Administration and the Internal Revenue Service have made slow progress in reconciling differences in employee earnings which has resulted in (1) Social Security beneficiaries receiving less in benefits than they were entitled to and (2) the Social Security trust

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funds' retaining \$7.7 billion in tax money related to earnings not recorded in SSA's records. From 1978 through 1984 SSA recorded about \$58.5 billion less in employees' earnings than IRS. Affected beneficiaries lost nearly \$17 a month. SSA or IRS needs to contact about 2.5 million employers to determine whether SSA did not record some earnings for their employees; records of 9.7 million individuals could have uncredited earnings.

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**Social Security:  
Telephone Accessibility**

GAO/HRD-87-138, Sept. 16.

GAO made 1,614 test telephone calls to the Social Security Administration's 34 teleservice centers and 471 randomly selected local offices for a five-day period to measure telephone accessibility. SSA representatives answered, during the test period, about two of every three calls from the public directly or within 2 minutes of being put on hold. As a group, local offices were more easily accessible than teleservices centers. Success in reaching SSA fluctuated by day of the week, with Monday being the most difficult day for getting calls answered.

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**Social Security:  
Staff Reductions and  
Service Quality:**

GAO/HRD-87-139BR, Sept. 17.

Certain unions have alleged that service in the Social Security Administration is deteriorating and that certain performance data are being manipulated. However, key performance indicators continue to show stable performance as staff levels continue to decline in the Social Security Administration. One exception to this is processing time for hearings which increased while staffing decreased. Employees in field offices said that practices that can distort reported performance are occurring but it is difficult to determine whether such practices are pervasive throughout SSA's 1,300 field offices. While the potential exists, GAO found little or no evidence that the practice were used to conceal any direct harm to the public.

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**Pension Plans:  
Many Workers Don't Know  
When They Can Retire**

GAO/HRD-87-94BR, Aug. 12.

Millions of workers do not understand their pension plans' early and normal retirement eligibility requirements as described in their plans' documents. A nationwide sample of over 3,800 households in 1983, projectable to about 25 million workers, showed that these workers didn't know the age or the minimum years of service at which they

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could receive full retirement benefits from their pension plan, the age at which they could retire and receive reduced benefits from their plan, and the youngest age or the minimum years of service at which they could retire and begin drawing at least partial benefits from their plan. Workers who do not have accurate information about their pension plans or make decisions based on misperceptions about their plans may change jobs or retire earlier or later than they would find optimal had they had better pension information.

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**Equal Employment  
Opportunity:  
Hispanics' Advancement  
Opportunities in SSA  
Region IX**

GAO/HRD-87-82, July 30.

Concern has been raised that Hispanics may not be receiving fair consideration for promotions in certain Social Security Administration offices in Region IX which covers California, Arizona, Nevada, and Hawaii. This report provides information on the number of staff who were bilingual in Spanish and English and in positions to directly provide services to claimants; Hispanic employment and selection rates for competitive promotions; noncompetitive reassignment of an employee to a managerial position; participation by Hispanics during FY 1984-86 in SSA region IX career development program; and the delay in designating a person to be the SSA Region IX Hispanic Employment Program manager.

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**Federal Workforce:  
Information on Employee  
Benefits**

Acc. No. 133826 (GAO/GGD-87-112FS), Sept. 3.

The federal government's share of benefits cost to its employees was about \$29 billion in FY 1986. But employees who are unfamiliar with the benefit programs and/or cannot get timely answers to their questions may find it difficult to make informed decisions. Some federal and private employers use annual personalized benefits statements to make their employees more aware of their fringe benefits. However, the information is scattered throughout thousands of pages of the Federal Personnel Manual causing personnel officials to spend a great deal of effort to respond to employee questions. Furthermore, the FPM has not been kept up to date. A benefits handbook available to agencies' personnel offices would reduce agency staff time in answering employee questions and reduce paperwork by eliminating preparation of redundant explanatory materials of uneven quality in hundreds of agency personnel offices.

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**Protecting the Elderly:  
Federal Agencies' Role  
Concerning Questionable  
Marketing Practices**

GAO/HRD-87-120FS, Aug. 26.

This fact sheet provides information on the role and activities of federal agencies in examining or reviewing organizations that use direct mail to sell to or solicit from the elderly. It identifies federal statutes or regulations these agencies may use to protect the elderly and determines their current and educational activities to prevent possible abuses of the elderly.

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**Veterans  
Administration**

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**VA Health Care:  
Resource Allocation  
Methodology Should  
Improve VA's Financial  
Management**

Acc. No. 133830 (GAO/HRD-87-123BR), Aug. 31.

The Veterans Administration's new methodology for allocating resources to its medical facilities appears to be superior to its previous method of budget allocation. The methodology should heighten the sensitivity of field managers and direct providers to the appropriateness of the services and the cost of care. VA has encountered several problems in implementing the methodology but is taking steps toward overcoming them.

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**Administration of  
Justice**

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**Interagency Agreements:  
Customs-Coast Guard  
Agreement for U.S.-  
Bahamas Drug Task Force  
Was Proper**

Acc. No. 133938 (GAO/AFMD-87-69), Aug. 31.

An \$8 million agreement between the Coast Guard and the Customs Service called for the Coast Guard to obtain and operate helicopters for the U.S.-Bahamas Drug Interdiction Task Force and also to provide enhanced communications operations to the task force. The agreement was proper and did not contravene any legal requirements concerning the use of the funds involved. The Coast Guard followed established Department of the Treasury procedures in billing the Customs Service under the agreement. While there was no impact on the legality of the agreement, the Customs Service did not follow its internal procedures



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for processing interagency agreements. It also did not promptly establish an obligation on its accounting records for the amount of the agreement as required.

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**Sentencing Guidelines:  
Potential Impact on the  
Federal Criminal Justice  
System**

Acc. No. 133858 (GAO/GGD-87-111), Sept. 10.

New sentencing guidelines are intended to reduce unwarranted sentencing disparities among offenders with similar criminal records who commit similar crimes. Although the United States Sentencing Commission believes that the population of federal prisons will increase significantly over the next 10 to 15 years, it believes the guidelines will contribute a relatively small amount to the overall population growth. It seems widely accepted that they will result in increased workloads for all components of the criminal justice system, but their full impact will become clear only when there is empirical evidence on how they are implemented. Witnesses to hearings of the Sentencing Commission and its guidelines believe that the constitutionality of the guidelines would probably be challenged.

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**General Government**

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**IRS/Treasury:  
Tax Withholding Systems  
Used by U.S. Tax Treaty  
Partners**

GAO/GGD-87-118FS, Sept. 11.

The United States has been losing millions of tax dollars annually because U.S. citizens and foreign persons residing in countries without tax treaties were evading the withholding tax on certain U.S. source income by falsely claiming residency through the reporting of addresses or bank accounts located in countries that were U.S. tax treaty partners. This practice allowed the U.S. citizen or foreign person to wrongfully obtain a reduction of or exemption from U.S. withholding tax. This report presents (1) a summary table of withholding systems currently in use and (2) descriptions of each of 27 countries' withholding systems.

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**Federal Employees:  
Trends in Career and  
Noncareer Appointments  
in Selected Departments**

GAO/GGD-87-103FS, Aug. 7.

This fact sheet breaks down information on career/noncareer appointment trends for the Departments of Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, the Interior, and Justice by their subunits. The

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appointment trends varied among specific subunits in each of the five departments. Overall, four of the five departments had more Schedule C employees and SES noncareer appointees in 1987 than in 1980 and three departments had fewer SES career appointees.

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**CPA Audit Quality:  
A Framework for  
Procuring Audit Services**

GAO/AFMD-87-34, Aug. 18.

State and governmental units are almost three times as likely to receive an audit that meets professional standards when they have an effective procurement process compared to when they do not. The units are also much more likely to have an effective procurement process if people with specialized knowledge of governmental accounting and auditing techniques—are involved in planning and implementing the procurement process. This report sets out a framework that entities can use to effectively procure audit services. It includes four critical attributes that, to the extent legally possible, should be present in any procurement, regardless of size. These attributes are: competition, solicitation, technical evaluation, and written agreement.

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**Financial Audit:  
House Recording Studio  
Revolving Fund for 1986  
and 1985**

Acc. No. 133976 (GAO/AFMD-87-50), Sept. 22.

The House Recording Studio makes photographic prints, as well as radio and television tape recordings, for Members and committees of the House. Prices charged for services are set by the Clerk of the House. Total assets for 1986 were \$1,585,070. Net income was \$30,082.

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**Impoundment Control:  
Update on Status of 57  
Proposed Deferrals**

Acc. No. 133909 (GAO/OGC-87-9), Sept. 11.

The President proposed to use funds from 25 of 57 deferrals of FY 1987 Budget Authority to finance the January 1987 federal employee pay raise and the new federal employee retirement system. Funds reported as part of another deferral were withheld for the same reason. This report gives the status of these and the remaining 57 proposed deferrals of FY 1987 Budget Authority.

## Congressional Testimony by GAO Officials

Live Fire Testing: Evaluating DOD's Programs, by Eleanor Chelimsky, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division, before the Acquisition Policy Panel, House Committee on Armed Services, Sept. 10. GAO/T-PEMD-87-7. Acc. No. 133888.

The Office of Munitions Control Can Strengthen Its License Review Process, by Joan M. McCabe, National Security and International Affairs Division, before the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Sept. 11. GAO/T-NSIAD-87-41. Acc. No. 133887.

AIDS Prevention: Views on the Administration's Proposed Budget for FY 1988, by Michael Zimmerman, Human Resources Division, before the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Sept. 22. GAO/T-HRD-87-24. Acc. No. 133978.

Many Workers Don't Know When They Can Retire, by Joseph F. Delfico, Human Resources Division, before the House Select Committee on Aging, Sept. 23. GAO/T-HRD-87-23. Acc. No. 133987.

GAO Pricing Reviews at Selected Subcontractor Locations, by Frank C. Conahan, National Security and International Affairs Division, before the Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security, House Committee on Government Operations, Sept. 23. GAO/T-NSIAD-87-44. Acc. No. 133986.

Asset Forfeiture Funds: Changes Needed to Enhance Congressional Oversight, by Gene L. Dodaro, General Government Division, before the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Spending, Budget and Accounting, Sept. 25. GAO/T-GGD-87-27. Acc. No. 134007.

Real Property Seizure and Disposal Program Improvements Needed, by Gene L. Dodaro, General Government Division, before the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Spending, Budget and Accounting, Sept. 25. GAO/T-GGD-87-28.

Prenatal Care, by Richard L. Fogel, Human Resources Division, before the Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations, House Committee on Government Operations, Sept. 30. GAO/T-HRD-87-25.

Integration of Services for Low-Income Families, by Joseph F. Delfico, Human Resources Division, before the House Select Committee on Hunger, Sept. 30. GAO/T-HRD-87-19.

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Hazardous Weather Detection and Dissemination Systems, by Kenneth M. Mead, Resources, Community, and Economic Development Division, before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Aviation, and Materials, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Sept. 30. GAO/T-RCED-87-43.



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☐ Government Contracting:  
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☐ Government Contracting:  
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☐ Antitank Weapons:  
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☐ Live Fire Testing:  
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☐ Defense Budget:  
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☐ Army Budget:  
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☐ Army Procurement:  
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☐ AIDS Prevention: Views on the Administration's Proposed Budget for FY 1988, Sept. 22. GAO/T-HRD-87-24. Acc. No. 133978.

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☐ GAO Pricing Reviews at Selected Subcontractor Locations, Sept. 23. GAO/T-NSIAD-87-44. Acc. No. 133986.

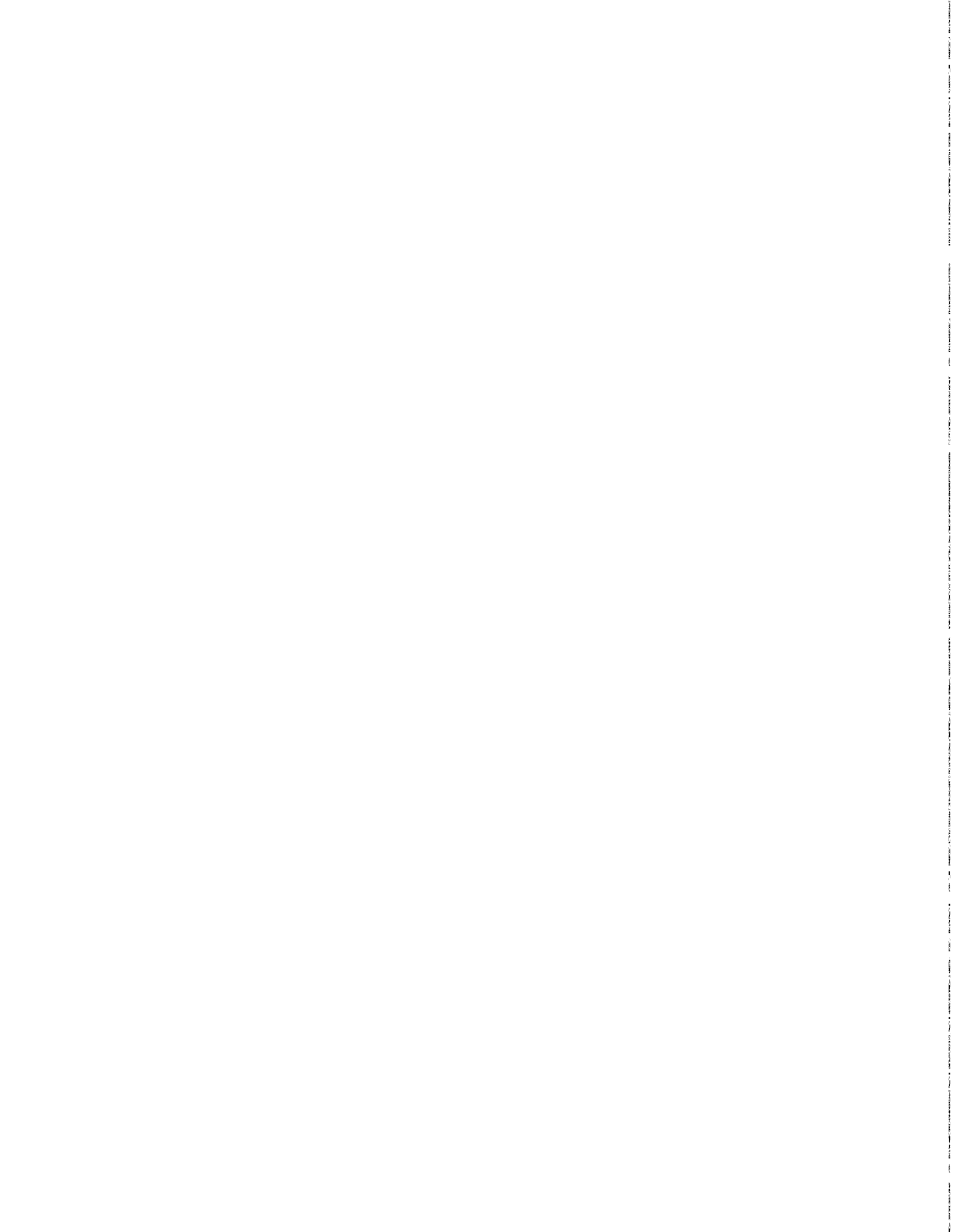
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☐ Real Property Seizure and Disposal Program Improvements Needed, Sept. 25. GAO/T-GGD-87-28.

☐ Integration of Services for Low-Income Families, Sept. 30. GAO/T-HRD-87-19.

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