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Washington, DC 20548

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States

Accessible Version

July 14, 2026

The Honorable William J. Pulte
Acting Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20511

Priority Open Recommendations: Office of the Director of National Intelligence

Dear Acting Director Pulte:

The purpose of this letter is to call your personal attention to two areas where open recommendations to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) should be given high priority.

In January 2026, we reported that, on a government-wide basis, 77 percent of our recommendations made 5 years ago were implemented.¹ ODNI's recommendation implementation rate was 48 percent. As of June 2026, ODNI has 44 open recommendations, including 6 priority recommendations.² Since our May 2025 letter, ODNI implemented one priority recommendation.³ Fully implementing these open priority recommendations could significantly improve ODNI's oversight of intelligence community activities.

We are highlighting the following areas that warrant your timely and focused attention:

- **Mitigating personnel vetting risks.** The personnel security clearance process helps prevent unauthorized disclosure of classified information that could put national security at risk. Our work has highlighted challenges that limit agencies' ability to grant security clearance reciprocity. We [recommended](#) that ODNI [improve IT systems](#) used to make reciprocity determinations, and that ODNI develop a procedure to assess the reliability of agency data. In addition, ODNI has not addressed issues with the reliability of data it uses to oversee the security clearance process. For example, over 60 percent of selected data that ODNI used to oversee the security clearance process in fiscal year 2024 was not sufficiently reliable. Ensuring the reliability of this data is important in strengthening oversight of the government-wide personnel security clearance process.

¹GAO, *Performance and Accountability Report, Fiscal Year 2025*, [GAO-26-900644](#) (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 29, 2026).

²GAO considers a recommendation to be a priority if, when implemented, it may significantly improve government operations, for example, by realizing large dollar savings; eliminating mismanagement, fraud, and abuse; or making progress toward addressing a high-risk or duplication issue.

³GAO, *Priority Open Recommendations: Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, [GAO-25-108078](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 1, 2025). In this letter, we identified 14 priority recommendations. Since then, in addition to the one that was implemented, we removed the priority status from eight recommendations and added one new priority recommendation.

- **Addressing intelligence enterprise management challenges.** Our four priority recommendations in this issue area are all sensitive or classified and relate to issues such as oversight of business functions and systems, and counterterrorism, among others.

One of these areas—mitigating personnel vetting risks—is included on GAO’s [High Risk List](#).⁴ Several other government-wide high risk areas have direct implications for ODNI and its operations, including [ensuring the cybersecurity of the nation](#). Our recommendation to ODNI related to [IT systems](#) used to make security clearance reciprocity determinations is also included as part of actions that ODNI should take to reduce fragmentation. More information on our [Duplication and Cost Savings](#) work can be found on the GAO website.

A comprehensive list of unclassified open recommendations, including new priority recommendations, and information about their status can be found on the GAO website at [Recommendations Database | U.S. GAO](#).⁵ Copies of this letter are being sent to the appropriate congressional committees.⁶ This letter will also be available at [Priority Recommendations | U.S. GAO](#).

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss how to address our open recommendations, as we pursue the shared goal of working to increase efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and spending. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Cathleen A. Berrick, Managing Director, Defense Capabilities and Management, at BerrickC@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Media Relations may be found on the last page of this letter. Thank you for your personal attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,

//SIGNED//

Orice Williams Brown
Acting Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosures – 1

cc: Mark T. Gray, Legislative Liaison Officer, Legislative Affairs

⁴This list identifies government operations with greater vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. GAO, *High-Risk Series: Heightened Attention Could Save Billions More and Improve Government Efficiency and Effectiveness*, [GAO-25-107743](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 25, 2025).

⁵Due to the classified nature of some of the recommendations to ODNI, additional details on the priority recommendations are in the classified enclosure to this letter.

⁶We also help Congress identify congressional oversight actions that can help agencies implement priority recommendations, such as incorporating them into legislation. James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, Pub. L. No. 117-263, § 7211(a)(2), 136 Stat. 2395, 3668 (2022) (codified at 31 U.S.C. § 719 note). Congress can also use its budget, appropriations, and oversight processes to incentivize executive branch agencies to act on our recommendations and monitor their progress. For example, Congress can hold hearings focused on agencies’ progress in implementing priority recommendations, withhold funds when appropriate, or take other actions to provide incentives for agencies to act.