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Acting Comptroller General
of the United States

June 16, 2026

The Honorable Keith E. Sonderling
Acting Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Priority Open Recommendations: Department of Labor

Dear Acting Secretary Sonderling:

The purpose of this letter is to call your personal attention to three areas where open recommendations to the Department of Labor (DOL) 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 DOL's recommendation implementation rate was 86 percent. As of June 2026, DOL has 101 open recommendations, including 10 priority recommendations.² Since our May 2025 letter, DOL has implemented two priority recommendations.³ Fully implementing the remaining open priority recommendations could significantly improve DOL's operations.

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

- **Protecting sensitive information.** Federal agencies collect large amounts of personally identifiable information (PII) for various government programs. GAO's cybersecurity high-risk area identifies the need for agencies, including DOL, to protect the privacy of PII and strengthen cybersecurity. [We recommended](#) that DOL fully define the role of DOL's senior agency official for privacy or other designated privacy official in reviewing and approving privacy protections for systems that contain such personal information. Ensuring that the leadership of DOL's privacy program is involved in this process could help ensure more effective implementation of critical protections for sensitive personal information.

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: Department of Labor*, [GAO-25-108003](#) (Washington, D.C.: May 7, 2025). In this letter, we identified 12 priority recommendations. Since then, two priority recommendation were implemented.

- **Enhancing unemployment insurance.** DOL needs to address unemployment insurance (UI) system issues that were exacerbated during the pandemic. These issues pose significant risks to service delivery and expose the system to significant financial losses through fraud and improper payments. DOL released a comprehensive transformation plan for the UI program, [as we recommended](#), which includes strategies to bolster state UI programs against fraud, build resilient and responsive state IT systems, and deliver high-quality customer service. However, not all the strategies in the plan have been completed. Fully implementing a plan and assisting Congress, as needed, to further transform the UI system would help to stabilize the system and prevent future disruptions to UI administration during economic downturns.

We also [recommended that DOL measure states' UI IT performance](#), such as determining whether states were using cloud computing infrastructures to support their UI systems. DOL published UI customer experience standards and metrics to help states evaluate their UI IT systems and identify areas needing improvement. However, DOL has yet to demonstrate that the agency has measured states' UI IT performance against established performance standards and metrics. Doing so would enhance the agency's ability to monitor whether states' UI systems are performing efficiently and effectively.

- **Strengthening worker safety and health protections.** DOL needs to address challenges protecting the safety and health of workers employed in the over 8 million workplace establishments nationwide that fall under the jurisdiction of its Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). For example, OSHA implemented an inspection program in 2024 at warehouses and delivery companies that focused, in part, on ergonomic hazards. However, OSHA's planned review of the program is limited and may not allow OSHA to assess its existing efforts to identify and address ergonomic hazards and whether it could better protect warehouse and delivery workers from them. Implementing [our recommendation](#) to evaluate how well this program is protecting workers from ergonomic hazards would help OSHA better protect workers from harm. In addition, we found that OSHA had not fully assessed its efforts to address workplace violence against health care workers, as [we recommended](#). Doing so will help OSHA identify which, if any, additional actions are needed to prevent workplace violence in health care facilities.

Two of these areas— [protecting sensitive information](#) and [enhancing unemployment insurance](#) — are on GAO's [High-Risk List](#).⁴ Several other government-wide high risk areas have direct implications for DOL and its operations, including [improving IT acquisitions and management](#). We also identified actions DOL should take that result in cost savings or enhanced revenue collection or reduce duplication, overlap and fragmentation. For example, [we recommended](#) that DOL expand its UI program guidance to require that future temporary programs establish state overpayment recovery baselines to support monitoring of states' progress in recovering identified overpayments. More information on our [Duplication and Cost Savings](#) work can be found on the GAO website.

A comprehensive list of open recommendations, including new priority recommendations, and information about their status can be found on the GAO website at [Recommendations Database](#)

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).

[| U.S. GAO](#). Copies of this letter are being sent to the appropriate congressional committees.⁵ 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 Cindy Brown Barnes, Managing Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, at brownbarnesc@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

cc: Mangala Kuppa, Chief Information Officer, Department of Labor

⁵We 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.

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