



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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DECEMBER 13, 1983

NATIONAL SECURITY AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

B-211920



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The Honorable Joseph P. Addabbo
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Subject: Use of Government Vehicles for Home-to-Work
Transportation (GAO/NSIAD-84-27)

In your February 15, 1983, letter, you asked us to investigate the practice by executive departments and agencies of providing transportation to officers or employees between their homes and places of employment. Because your request was similar to a study that we were directed by the House Conference Report to perform, we briefed your office on March 10, 1983, on ongoing GAO work in this area. As agreed with your office, our report¹ in response to the House Conference Report satisfied most of your needs. However, your office requested that we report to you on (1) the amounts of overtime chauffeurs and drivers incurred in providing home-to-work transportation and the need for it, (2) the validity of reasons given for the need for such transportation taking into consideration such things as security, position, and grade, and (3) the cost effectiveness of using alternative methods of transportation.

OVERTIME INCURRED BY CHAUFFEURS
AND DRIVERS

Our study of home to work transportation provided to headquarters' officials by 13 executive departments and agencies in the greater Washington, D.C. metropolitan area showed that 15,676 hours of chauffeur and driver overtime costing \$202,148 were incurred from October 1 through December 31, 1982. The agencies' overtime costs were not detailed enough to identify overtime incurred for home-to-work transportation. The hours and costs of overtime are shown in enclosure I.

¹Use of Government Vehicles for Home-to-Work Transportation
(GAO/NSIAD-83-3, Sept. 28, 1983).

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As shown in our September 28, 1983, report, more officials were being provided home-to-work transportation than were authorized by law. Compliance with the law should eliminate some overtime incurred to provide this transportation.

At least one agency has been able to reduce overtime by using staggered working hours or split shifts. Department of Defense officials informed us that they recently revised their chauffeurs' work schedules to eliminate 3 hours of overtime that were built into some drivers' daily schedules. This reduced overtime by about 100 hours every two weeks.

VALIDITY OF REASONS FOR PROVIDING
HOME-TO-WORK TRANSPORTATION

The reasons given for providing home-to-work transportation to officials in the 13 departments and agencies were:

- Personal safety/security.
- Security for classified documents.
- Capability of maintaining constant communication with officials.
- Need for extended workday.
- Attendance at official functions after work hours.
- Public transportation or parking for privately owned vehicles unavailable or inaccessible within a reasonable distance.

As a general rule, these reasons do not comply with existing law. Under existing law (31 U.S.C. 1344(b)), transportation between home and work is expressly made nonofficial business, except for a limited number of officials designated in the statute. These officials are primarily secretaries of cabinet departments (including the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force), heads of foreign diplomatic or consular posts, and certain employees assigned to temporary "fieldwork" positions.

While GAO, by legal decision, has considered certain unique circumstances as warranting an exception to the statutory prohibition, the exceptions have been limited ones. For example, 54 Comp. Gen. 855 (1975) allowed the provision of home-to-work transportation for DOD employees who were stationed in a foreign country where there was serious danger to the employees because of terrorist activities. Such exceptions would not justify use

of Government vehicles for home-to-work transportation on a regular basis for the reasons cited by the departments and agencies we surveyed.

Our decision of June 3, 1983 (B-210555), discusses the statutory prohibition against home-to-work transportation and suggests consideration of legislative amendments to clarify allowable uses. We understand the Office of Management and Budget may submit proposed amendments during the current Congress.

COST EFFECTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE
METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION

Available information indicates that the use of a chauffeur driven government vehicle is generally the most costly method of providing such transportation. For example, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Executive Motor Pool has calculated the average cost of chauffeured vehicles to be \$2.82² per mile, while the use of commercial taxicabs in the Washington metropolitan area costs about \$1.70 for the first mile plus \$1.00 for each additional mile. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, its use of chauffeured vehicles costs \$4.93 per mile.

The relative cost per mode of transportation is also reflected in the priority order shown in the Office of the Secretary of Defense's regulations governing the use of motor vehicles. It states that for essential transportation before or after normal duty hours, the following methods should be considered in the order shown:

1. Department of Defense - scheduled bus service.
2. Scheduled public transportation.
3. Voluntary use of privately owned motor vehicles on a reimbursable basis.
4. Taxicab on a reimbursable basis.
5. Defense motor vehicle.

²This rate is based on 1982 costs for the executive motor pool and includes such items as salaries, overtime pay, gasoline, and maintenance and vehicle leasing.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY


Our objectives were to determine (1) the amounts of overtime chauffeurs and drivers incurred, (2) the validity of reasons given for providing home-to-work transportation, and (3) the cost effectiveness of using alternate methods of transportation. We limited the scope of our study to 13 selected executive branch departments and agencies in the greater Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. As agreed with your office, these were the same departments and agencies included in our study directed by the House Conference Report.

In March 1983 we sent letters to these departments and agencies requesting them to provide the information needed to satisfy our objectives. As agreed with your office, we did not perform a detailed analysis of the cost effectiveness of using alternative methods of transportation nor did we independently verify the information the departments and agencies provided.

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We are sending copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget, and to the heads of the federal departments and agencies mentioned in the report.

Sincerely yours,



Frank C. Conahan
Director

Enclosure

TOTAL DOLLARS AND HOURS OF OVERTIMEFOR CHAUFFEURS AND DRIVERSOCTOBER 1 to DECEMBER 31, 1982

<u>Departments/agencies</u>	<u>Overtime</u>	
	<u>Costs</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Office of Management and Budget	\$11,069	783
Department of Defense:		
Office of the Secretary of Defense Executive Motor Pool	61,423	4,375
Pentagon (Army) Motor Pool	44,565	4,396
Navy Motor Pool	<u>27,189</u>	<u>2,014</u>
Subtotal	<u>133,177</u>	<u>10,785</u>
Department of Health and Human Services	4,496	307
Department of Housing and Urban Development	5,027	355
Department of Justice	13,537	947
Department of Transportation	5,309	401
Central Intelligence Agency	8,670	578
Civil Aeronautics Board	320	27
Environmental Protection Agency	12,340	885
Federal Communications Commission	1,729	124
Federal Home Loan Bank Board	1,776	137
Federal Trade Commission	2,803	200
National Science Foundation	<u>1,895</u>	<u>147</u>
Total	<u>\$202,148</u>	<u>15,676</u>