

# Washington Update



## GAO RELEASES REPORT ON DUPLICATIVE PROGRAMS AND IMPROPER PAYMENTS

The U.S. Government Accountability Office has released its latest report on ongoing efforts to curb wasteful spending, as well as the need for executive branch agencies and Congress to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and activities. Highlights from the report, entitled “Opportunities to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, Duplication, and Improper Payments and Achieve Other Financial Benefits,” found some interesting, are below:

- For the first time in recent years, the government-wide improper payment estimate significantly

increased, to \$124 billion. This increase was primarily due to estimates for Medicare, Medicaid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit, which account for over 76 percent of the government-wide estimate.

- The federal government faces an unsustainable long-term fiscal path. Changing this path will require difficult fiscal policy decisions to alter both long-term federal spending and revenue.
- GAO identified 13 significant financial literacy programs or activities among 12 federal agencies. The Department of the Treasury and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau should develop clear recommendations on the allocation of federal financial literacy resources across programs and agencies, and identify options for consolidating federal financial literacy efforts.
- Federal spending on Medicaid demonstrations could be reduced if the Department of Health and Human Services was required to improve its process for reviewing, approving, and making transparent the basis for spending limits approved for Medicaid demonstrations. GAO estimated the federal share of savings could have been up to \$21 billion over five years for two states’ recent demonstrations that they reviewed.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services would need to ensure widespread use of its fraud detection systems to better position itself to determine and measure progress toward achieving



the \$21 billion in financial benefits that the agency projected as a result of implementing these systems.

The full GAO report can be found at [www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-440T](http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-440T).

## THE 2015 WASHINGTON OFFICE SURVEY IS NOW UNDERWAY: SHARE YOUR INPUT!

It's that time of year again: the NASACT Washington office wants your feedback on important federal relations issues that you face in 2015. Follow this [link](#) to a short survey that we would like you to complete so that we may get a good idea of your opinions on certain topics for the coming year.

Please fill out the survey by this ***Friday, March 13th***.

Your responses are extremely important to us, and the data will not be used or shared with any outside parties.

Thank you for your time!

## THE WEEK AHEAD: HOUSE IN RECESS WHILE SENATE LOOKS AT TAX REFORM

With the House of Representatives on a one-week recess, the Senate continues to conduct hearings on tax reform and other issues:

### Tuesday

The Senate Finance Committee will conduct a hearing on "Tax Complexity, Compliance, and Administration: The Merits of Simplification in Tax Reform."

- <http://www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/?id=d121784e-5056-a032-52f3-e7560f44c675>

### Wednesday

The Senate Budget Committee will discuss proposals and examine benefits of a balanced budget.

- <http://www.budget.senate.gov/republican/public/index.cfm/hearing-schedule>

### Thursday

The Senate Finance Committee will conduct a hearing on "Protecting Taxpayers from Schemes and Scams During the 2015 Tax Filing Season." State government representatives on the panel will include Mike Alley, commissioner of the Indiana Department of Revenue; John Valentine, chair of the Utah State Tax Commission; and Ellen Klem, director of consumer outreach and education at the Office of the Attorney General, Oregon Department of Justice.

- <http://www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/?id=06a4ff7-5056-a032-5288-4d577f5e99b4>

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