

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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January 27, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol, Room H-232  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol, H-204  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As the House prepares again to work with the Senate on crafting the next emergency legislative relief package, we write to urge you to consider funding federal information technology (IT) modernization efforts by investing \$9 billion into the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF).

For nearly a year, our country has battled the impacts from the global pandemic. At the beginning, Congress worked together to provide unprecedented levels of economic assistance to millions of Americans facing illness, unemployment, food insecurity, and an inability to pay their mortgages or rent. Unfortunately, the roll out of that assistance was severely hindered by a federal IT infrastructure that has been neglected for decades, leaving it vulnerable to cyberattacks and other costly breakdowns.

Last week, we unfortunately hit another heartbreaking milestone of the pandemic: 400,000 coronavirus deaths.<sup>1</sup> In addition to soaring coronavirus cases and deaths, our country is also experiencing another spike in unemployment. Just last week, the Department of Labor reported that the number of people seeking unemployment increased to 965,000, the highest number of unemployment claims filed since August 2020.<sup>2</sup>

The federal government's consistent failure to prioritize IT modernization and program delivery prevented the public from receiving the federal assistance Congress authorized to help the nation stay afloat during one of the worst global pandemics and economic crises of our lifetime. Without modern and nimble IT systems, the federal government cannot deliver critical payments and services to individuals, families, and businesses who rely on them. We cannot allow a failure to invest in technology prevent us, once again, from effectively

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<sup>1</sup> *Coronavirus in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count*, New York Times (Jan. 20, 2021) (online at [www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html)).

<sup>2</sup> *Unemployment Claims Rise Sharply, Showing New Economic Pain*, New York Times (Jan. 14, 2021) (online at [www.nytimes.com/2021/01/14/business/economy/unemployment-claims.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/14/business/economy/unemployment-claims.html)).

implementing lifesaving policies and programs.

On January 14, 2021, President Joe Biden released a \$1.9 trillion plan to help our country recover from the economic instability catalyzed by the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> The \$1.9 trillion plan includes funding for vaccination distribution, additional unemployment benefits, and federal IT modernization and security upgrades. Specifically, the plan calls for a revolutionary \$9 billion for the TMF.

Congress established the TMF as part of the bipartisan Modernizing Government Technology Act to help agencies kick-start IT modernization efforts, including the replacement of legacy systems.<sup>4</sup> Yet, one of the primary challenges facing federal IT modernization is the lack of sustained and robust congressional investment in the fund. The TMF has been chronically underfunded since its inception. To date, Congress has approved only \$150 million for the TMF, despite myriad project proposals from federal agencies totaling more than \$500 million.<sup>5</sup> Existing funding currently fails to meet the needs of federal agencies.

The Subcommittee on Government Operations has long advocated for substantial, multi-year investments into federal IT improvements so that federal agencies can finally begin to undertake truly transformative IT modernization projects that will help the federal government serve all Americans. A larger capital investment into the fund would give the federal government a chance to address the most challenging enterprise-wide problems, such as retiring legacy IT systems, securing federal systems and information, and delivering seamless services and programs that the public deserves.

That is why the Subcommittee respectfully requests that any forthcoming emergency legislative relief package meets the President's funding request of \$9 billion for the TMF. We must begin to address IT investments now, or we will continue down the same path as before unable to deliver critical services to the public at a time when our country needs it the most.

We look forward to working with you to create the agency capacity and Congressional oversight necessary to ensure this funding brings about transformative IT investments.


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<sup>3</sup> Biden-Harris Transition, *Press Release: Fact Sheet: President-elect Biden Announces American Rescue Plan* (Jan. 14, 2021) (online at [mailchi.mp/bidentransition/ascertainment-news-statement-3589994?e=9df75180c1](https://mailchi.mp/bidentransition/ascertainment-news-statement-3589994?e=9df75180c1)).

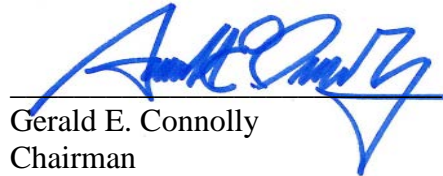
<sup>4</sup> Pub. L. No. 115-91 (2017) (online at [www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ91/PLAW-115publ91.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ91/PLAW-115publ91.pdf)).

<sup>5</sup> *TMF Gets \$25 Million Boost in Funding Bill*, Federal Computer Week (Dec. 16, 2019) (online at [fcw.com/articles/2019/12/16/tmf-boost-approps-mazmanian.aspx](https://fcw.com/articles/2019/12/16/tmf-boost-approps-mazmanian.aspx)); Committee on Oversight and Reform, Subcommittee on Government Operations, *Hearing on Federal IT Modernization: How the Coronavirus Exposed Outdated Systems* (July 20, 2020) (online at [oversight.house.gov/legislation/hearings/federal-it-modernization-how-the-coronavirus-exposed-outdated-systems](https://oversight.house.gov/legislation/hearings/federal-it-modernization-how-the-coronavirus-exposed-outdated-systems)).

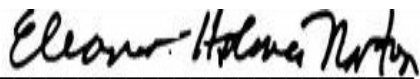
Sincerely,



Carolyn B. Maloney  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform



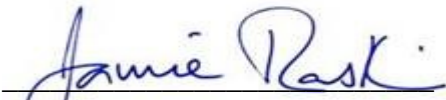
Gerald E. Connolly  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Government  
Operations



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



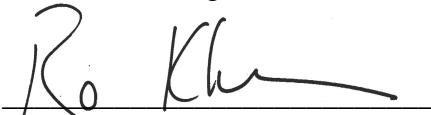
Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



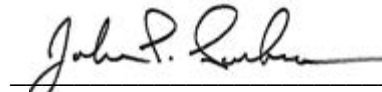
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



Robin Kelly  
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



John Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable James R. Comer, Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Jody B. Hice, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations