

Opening Comments of Senator Y. Miller June 29, 2009

Earlier this month, Senator Colgan asked that the General Government Subcommittee undertake a review of questions and issues related to the provision of information technology services by the Virginia Information Technologies Agency, and the Commonwealth's contract with its private partner, Northrop Grumman.

It's clear that the circumstances surrounding termination of the Commonwealth's Chief Investment Officer is the catalyst that has focused our attention on the consolidation and modernization of the state's information technology function.

Rather than involve ourselves with a personnel matter, however, it would be my intention that we instead look at the issues and events that led to this action. In my view, the dismissal may in fact be symptomatic of deeper problems within our technology modernization effort.

It is our plan, then, to focus on the performance of both VITA and our private partner, Northrop Grumman, in implementing the sweeping changes that Virginia has undertaken as we modernize our information technology support. The challenges presented by this effort are immense by any standard. Not only was the 2003 consolidation of IT services from state agencies into VITA a massive and complex undertaking, the public-private partnership entered into with Northrop Grumman in 2005 has been described as the nation's largest.

Today, we will begin the process of educating ourselves on the issues and the participants. Over the past week we have been very fortunate to have the full cooperation of staff from JLARC, the Auditor of Public Accounts, and attorneys from the Division of Legislative Services. Our staff, along with that of the House, have

been able to meet with the Governor's Chief of Staff and key executive branch officials, and staff of the Office of the Attorney General, to prepare for this meeting.

In his remarks to the Finance Committee, Senator Colgan said that he intended to talk with his colleagues in the House and on JLARC to see if we could move forward together on this issue. I'm pleased to tell you that this cooperative approach has already yielded positive results. Late last week, Senator Colgan and Delegate Putney sent a joint letter to the Chairman of JLARC, Delegate Kirk Cox, asking that JLARC staff be prepared to present the findings of their VITA study in October. This is substantially earlier than called for in JLARC's original schedule. I am hopeful that this spirit of mutual support and cooperation will continue.

Moving on to today's agenda, we have three presentations planned. First, we will hear from Len Pomata, the new Secretary of Technology. Mr. Pomata is also the Vice-chairman of the Information Technology Investment Board and interim Chief Information Officer. Mr. James McGuirk, the Chairman of the Information Technology Investment Board was invited to appear this morning, but was unable to do so. We will provide time for him at our next meeting.

The second item on the agenda is a briefing by JLARC of their "Interim Review of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency." This will be followed by a summary of the Auditor of Public Accounts' Reports on VITA and Virginia's information technology partnership. As you likely know, both JLARC and the Auditor of Public Accounts have been involved in assessment and review of the VITA public-private technology initiative since its inception.

If there are no questions from the members of the subcommittee, I'd now like to welcome Mr. Pomata.