

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 10, 2015

The Honorable Denise Roth
Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Administrator Roth,

I write to express my disappointment regarding the General Services Administration's (GSA) mishandling of the Army's childcare subsidy program, and to request detailed information on how the GSA intends to expeditiously rectify this situation. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee, I further request that you communicate whether additional resources or authorities are needed to ensure that our military families promptly receive childcare subsidy payments.

The report released by GSA's Office of Inspector General on September 8, 2015 uncovered disturbing revelations of thousands of unprocessed childcare subsidy actions. According to testimony from GSA Inspector General Carol Ochoa, the number of unprocessed childcare subsidy actions, unanswered emails, unpaid invoices, and unreturned phone messages doubled between January and July of this year. The report also indicated that the GSA did not conduct a complete needs assessment prior to accepting an additional 9,000 military families into the program. Additionally, the IG report alleged that the sensitive personal information of military families has been compromised. In an environment of increased cyber security threats, this mismanagement of sensitive information is unacceptable.

The IG report further highlights the hardships military families have endured as a result of program mismanagement. One Army soldier stated that his family is filing for bankruptcy and paying one thousand dollars a month out of pocket as a result of not being able to receive the child care subsidy. An Army spouse indicated that she may have to drop out of school to stay home with her children due to lack of access, while another spouse stated that she may lose her job due as a result of the uncertainty her family has faced regarding the childcare subsidy.

Our military families are an integral part of our nation's defense, and the mishandling of the Army's childcare subsidy program detrimentally impacts our military readiness. I urge the GSA to take swift action to resolve these issues and look forward to reviewing your plans to ensure our military families have access to childcare.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator