

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 14, 2015

The Honorable Ash Carter
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Carter:

Today, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released their report, *“Women in STEM Research: Better Data and Information Sharing Could Improve Oversight of Federal Grant-making and Title IX Compliance.”* Out of concern for the advancement and fair treatment of women in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields in the federal government, we requested that the GAO examine federal agencies’ efforts to address gender discrimination in the (STEM) fields.

In correspondence with you earlier this year following a preliminary report from GAO, we expressed concern that the Department of Defense’s (DOD’s) data collection practices are incomplete and hinder oversight and management of your federal grant-making programs. Over half of the components at DOD reviewed in the GAO report did not collect data that would allow for success rates to be calculated at all, let alone to determine whether gender differences exist. One component at DOD was unable to even provide the name of the Principal Investigator associated with awarded grants. As a grant-making agency which awarded \$1.6 billion of taxpayer dollars in Fiscal Year 2014 alone, it is extremely important that the DOD be able to demonstrate it funds the best science in an unbiased manner.

An additional troubling finding of the final GAO report is that DOD does not conduct Title IX reviews of grant-receiving institutions. Title IX reviews of federally-funded grant programs at educational institutions are required by law under the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

We appreciate that DOD has acknowledged existing deficiencies in their data collection and has expressed willingness to put corrective measures into place. We call on you to quickly implement changes to your data collection practices to follow federal internal control standards to collect demographic data and follow funding through the entire grant lifecycle. We also call on you to abide by the law and immediately begin conducting regular Title IX reviews on institutions receiving DOD grants. Women in STEM will not reach equality unless we remain vigilant to the effort.

Thank you for your time and careful attention to this important matter. If you have any questions please contact Rep. Slaughter's office through Jennifer Brookes at jennifer.brookes@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-3615.

Sincerely,



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress