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By Theresa Defino

Grassley Seeks GAO Report on Agencies, Awardees' COI Policies

Stating that “a number of recent reports, articles and congressional hearings have raised concerns about whether the U.S. public is realizing the full benefit of taxpayer-funded research given the implications of foreign-researcher engagement in federally-funded research,” Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, has requested the Government Accountability Office (GAO) undertake a study to help him “better understand how federal agencies implement and oversee conflict-of-interest (COI) policies and requirements related to federally-funded research.” In his Aug. 6 letter to U.S. Comptroller General Gene Dodaro, Grassley noted that some universities and others have recently dismissed researchers for failing to report foreign support as required under COI disclosure policies.

Grassley asked Dodaro to provide information on the “key similarities and differences” among “federal agency and non-federal institutional” COI policies, “agency monitoring and enforcement for federally funded research,” and on the extent to which COI policies include “disclosure of all foreign affiliations.” He also asked OIG to address “opportunities [that] exist, if any, to further strengthen implementation of these policies and requirements, to include changes to grant forms that place more responsibility for financial disclosures on principal investigators,” and to collect the “views of selected stakeholders, such as research universities and principal investigators, on other options to strengthen federal agencies’ and nonfederal institutions’ ability to identify and address foreign threats to federally-funded research.” Grassley has been leading the charge in Congress to investigate the possible influence of foreign governments in U.S. funded research (“In This Month’s E-News,” RRC 16, no. 7). Grassley did not set a deadline for GAO to complete the report.

[Link to Grassley letter to GAO](#)

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