

## Congress Cannot Afford to Overlook GAO Recommendations

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The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) makes thousands of recommendations annually to Congress aimed at reducing government waste and improving efficiency. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, the government squandered \$236 billion due to [improper payments](#). Since many of GAO's suggestions produce measurable financial benefits, Congress is typically receptive with an implementation rate of [over 75%](#).

Yet, GAO [reported](#) that as of March 2024, there were 5,480 unused recommendations. The agency estimates that implementing unused recommendations with a measurable financial benefit would reduce the deficit by between \$106 and \$208 billion, with a median of \$151 billion.

Unused recommendations that would save \$1 billion or more involve Medicare, COVID-19 tax relief, public-safety broadband network, and student loans.

GAO's recommendation with the greatest potential unrealized savings is Medicare payment reform. GAO suggests Congress instruct the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to [equalize payment rates](#) between health care service locations. The Congressional Budget Office estimated this would save a massive \$141 billion over 10 years. For perspective, simply implementing this fix would have covered every dollar spent by the U.S. Department of Transportation in all of [FY 2024](#) and then some.

Among GAO's other high-savings recommendations is strengthening compliance efforts for COVID-19 employer tax programs. The agency made five recommendations to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that relate to document processes and recapturing ineligible claims. The IRS implemented two of the five recommendations, rejecting three that together would save tens of billions of dollars over just two years.

Considering the federal government closed out FY 2024 with a massive [\\$35.5 trillion](#) in national debt, it cannot afford to overlook these opportunities to stop wasting taxpayer money.

A median savings of \$151 billion from these unused recommendations equates to about \$1,140 in taxpayer dollars that could be returned to every single [household](#) in America.

During an era of unsustainable debt and high cost of living, Congress owes it to the American people to preserve precious taxpayer dollars and implement the GAO recommendations to the fullest extent possible.

