

Reforming DCAA: Are new staff hires the answer?

Posted By [JD Kathuria](#) On October 22, 2009 @ 5:15 pm In [News & Comment](#) | [No Comments](#)

When it comes to the Defense Contract Auditing Agency, here's a sobering statistic to chomp on, courtesy of the AP: Compared with other federal oversight organizations (like the GAO), DCAA's return on investment is pretty slim ^[1]. For every dollar GAO spends, it saves taxpayers \$94. At DCAA, the ratio is \$5 saved for every dollar spent.

Recently, DCAA officials offered members of the House Armed Services Defense Acquisition Reform Panel [this reason](#) ^[2]: The agency is understaffed and employees are often under the gun to deliver audit reports to Pentagon contracting officers far too soon. "There is a clear disparity between resources and requirements," testified Gregory Kutz, managing director of forensic audits and special investigations at the Government Accountability Office. DCAA is set to hire 300 auditor trainees this year and 200 more in 2010 to address the issue. The agency may also bring on board 200 hires in 2011, reports Robert Brodsky of Government Executive.

But will that really solve the problem? Some have doubts. "I wonder if 700 new people is helpful or will create new problems," said Rep. Jim Cooper, D-Tenn. "What we want is new solutions, not just hiring new people." Even DCAA Director April Stephenson has stated that the agency has a lighter workload than in recent years.

Tad DeHaven over at Cato Institute offers this [point to consider](#) ^[3]: "The GAO's relative independence when conducting oversight is a chief reason why it outperforms the DCAA, which is housed under the DOD chain of command. Thus, an obvious reform would be to have contract auditing at DOD, and perhaps throughout the federal government, performed by an independent agency."

What's it going to take to reform DCAA? [You tell us](#) ^[4].

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