

Why GSA Reform is Overdue Common Sense

The Absurdity of the Status Quo

Here's a number that should make you pause: **65% of the time, federal agencies bypass the GSA system entirely.** Think about that. The government created an agency specifically to handle procurement efficiently, and agencies avoid it two-thirds of the time because it's too cumbersome to use.

It's like building a highway to reduce traffic, only to have everyone take the side roads because there are too many toll booths.



The Real-World Pain

For Businesses

Imagine you're a software company that wants to sell to the government. You need to increase your pricing by 5% due to inflation—a routine business decision that takes minutes in the private sector. With GSA, **30 to 90 days of bureaucratic review.** Contract officers spend weeks checking your decimal points and cover letter formatting while your business needs go unmet. The result? Many excellent companies walk away from government contracts. When Amazon—a company that's mastered logistics and procurement—decides your system is too broken to bother with, you have a problem.

For Government Agencies

When a school district gets federal education funding to upgrade its computer lab, it shouldn't have to wait months for GSA processing while its students fall further behind. When a state emergency management agency faces a natural disaster, they shouldn't be wrestling with federal procurement requirements while people need help.

Yet that's precisely what happens. The VA admits that GSA pricing applies to only 35% of its needs, forcing it into last-minute, less competitive purchasing—exactly the opposite of what a procurement system should achieve.

The Middleman Scandal

Here's where it gets truly wasteful: Despite executive orders calling for direct purchasing from manufacturers, GSA has done the opposite. Instead of buying software directly from Microsoft or Adobe, they route deals through middlemen like Carousell.

You're paying extra fees for literally no added value. It's like hiring someone to stand between you and the cashier at a store—they don't negotiate better prices, they don't add expertise, they take a cut.

Why This System Persists (And Why It Shouldn't)

The current system serves almost no one:

1. **Businesses lose** because they spend more on consultants and bureaucracy than on innovation
2. **Government agencies lose** because they can't get what they need when they need it
3. **Taxpayers lose** because they pay hidden fees and inflated costs
4. **Citizens lose** because government services are slower and less effective

The only winners? The consultants who help navigate the bureaucracy and the middlemen who collect unnecessary fees.

The Modern Alternative

The solution isn't revolutionary—it's just bringing government procurement into the 21st century:

Phase 1: Automate the paperwork maze. Think "TurboTax for government contracts"—software that guides businesses through requirements, catching errors before submission, and providing real-time status tracking.

Phase 2: Automate routine changes. When a vendor needs to update pricing or add a product, software can validate it instantly against contract terms. Contract officers can focus on complex negotiations instead of checking decimal points.

Phase 3: Create a real marketplace. Give government buyers transparent pricing, real usage data, and the ability to compare options—exactly like shopping on any modern e-commerce platform.

The Tangible Benefits

For Taxpayers

- ☑ **Direct savings:** Eliminate middleman fees on billions in purchases
- ☑ **Transparency:** See what the government pays and whether it's getting good value
- ☑ **Better services:** When agencies can procure tools quickly, they serve citizens better

For Businesses

- ☑ **Time to market:** Days instead of months to start selling or update offerings
- ☑ **Lower barriers:** Small businesses can compete without expensive consultants
- ☑ **Level playing field:** Success based on product quality, not bureaucracy navigation skills

For Government Agencies

- ☑ **Real cost savings:** Competitive markets plus eliminated middleman fees
- ☑ **Faster response:** Procure solutions in days when urgent needs arise
- ☑ **Better decisions:** Access to actual usage and pricing data for negotiations

For Society

- ☑ **Innovation:** When the best companies can easily work with the government, citizens get cutting-edge solutions
- ☑ **Economic efficiency:** A more competitive government marketplace helps the entire economy

- ☑ **Reduced waste:** More tax dollars go to actual services instead of administrative overhead

Why This Matters Now

We have the technology to fix this. Cloud computing, machine learning, modern data systems—these aren't experimental concepts. They're the same tools that power every efficient marketplace in the private sector.

The question isn't technical feasibility. It's whether we have the will to implement common-sense reforms that benefit everyone, except the bureaucrats and middlemen who profit from the current system's complexity.

The Bottom Line

This isn't a partisan issue. It's not about big or small government. It's about **effective government**.

When a system is so broken that agencies avoid it 65% of the time, when simple changes take three months to process, and when taxpayers pay extra fees for no added value, the system isn't serving its purpose.

We can build procurement that's faster, cheaper, more transparent, and more effective. We have the technology. We have the know-how. What we need is the decision to prioritize taxpayers and results over bureaucratic inertia.

The cost of inaction isn't just wasted money—it's missed opportunities, slower innovation, and a government that can't respond effectively when its citizens need it most.