

[H.R. 1831, Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2015, as amended](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Monday, July 27, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 1831](#), *the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2015, as amended*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 1831 was introduced on April 16, 2015, by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) and was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, which ordered the bill reported, as amended, by voice vote on May 19, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 1831 establishes the Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission to study how best to expand the use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of federal programs and tax expenditures. The Commission would study existing data inventories, data infrastructure, and statistical protocols across the federal government, and make recommendations on how to incorporate outcome measurements, randomized controlled trials, and rigorous impact analyses into government program designs.¹

The Commission would study the usefulness of establishing a federal agency data clearinghouse to aggregate various sources of data to ensure accurate and relevant data is available to policymakers and the public. The bill also requires the Commission to study how best to protect the privacy rights of individuals who interact with federal agencies.

The bill requires the President and Congressional leaders to appoint a total of 15 members, within 45 days of enactment, to serve on the Commission without pay. The Commission's authority would terminate 18 months after enactment. The Commission is required to issue a report to the President and Congress, no later than 15 months after a majority of members have been appointed to the Commission.

The bill requires the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau to transfer funds, as specified in advance in appropriations acts, to provide administrative support for the Commission and for certain government statistical agencies to provide certain funds for its operation.

¹ See [House Report 114-211](#) at 6.

BACKGROUND

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the federal government administers more than 1,500 different programs, yet only 37 percent of program managers said that an evaluation of their programs had been completed in the last five years.²

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 established statutory requirements for most agencies to set goals, measure performance, and submit related plans and reports to Congress for its potential use. This Act was considered by some to be a watershed moment in government accountability, because it was the first attempt to comprehensively measure the effectiveness of government programs.

In 2010, Congress passed the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) to reform the GPRA by: increasing internet posting and reporting requirements; establishing new products and processes that focus on goal-setting and performance measurement in policy areas that cut across agencies; bringing attention to using goals and measures during policy implementation; and requiring individuals to be responsible for some goals and management tasks.

According to a GAO report, when implementing portions of GPRA and GPRAMA, agencies did not work together to consistently define their programs, which led to a lack of program effectiveness comparability. GAO recommended that increased coordination could help agencies identify where they have programs that contribute to similar goals, and thus, opportunities to collaborate in achieving desired outcomes.³ H.R. 1831 directs the established Commission to study the usefulness of centralizing and standardizing such federal program performance measurements.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) enacting H.R. 1831 would cost \$3 million over the 2016 to 2020 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. The bill would authorize several federal agencies to contribute up to \$3 million from appropriated funds to carry out the duties of the commission. Enacting H.R. 1831 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [John Huston](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-5539.

² See GAO Report, [“Government Efficiency and Effectiveness.”](#) October 2014.

³ See GAO Report, [“Government Efficiency and Effectiveness.”](#) October 2014.