

Amendment 894 – Sets Performance Standards to Identify Failing Government Programs

Establishes a deficit-neutral reserve fund to set performance measures for every government program.

The Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance lists over 1,800 federal government subsidy programs across 63 departments and agencies. The number of federal government subsidy programs has grown by 54 percent since 1990.

This amendment expresses a Sense of the Senate that each federal department and agency should develop performance measures, or metrics, for all programs receiving federal assistance under its jurisdiction.

This amendment states performance measures should:

- Draw on research-based, quantitative data
- Take into account program purpose and program design
- Include criteria to evaluate the cost effectiveness of programs
- Include criteria to evaluate the administration and management of programs
- Include criteria to evaluate oversight and accountability of recipients of assistance under such programs

The FY 2010 budget contains a provision that would create a bipartisan congressional sunset commission to review federal programs, focusing on unauthorized and non-performing programs. The commission would help abolish obsolete and duplicative programs and provide for improved government accountability and greater openness.

I applaud the creation of a sunset commission, and I believe the metrics amendment I am offering will further aid the commission, and the American people, in examining federal programs.

President Obama supports program evaluations

President Barack Obama stated, “The Federal Government has an overriding obligation to American taxpayers. It should perform its functions efficiently and effectively while ensuring that its actions result in the best value for the taxpayers.”

President Obama has proposed opening up the insular performance measurement process to the public, Congress and outside experts.¹

According to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), of the “Program Assessment Rating Tool” (PART) assessments performed in 2008, only 63% of program performance goals across the federal government were met.²

President Obama has proposed working with Congress to address federal government efficiency by creating performance teams to reform programs, replacing existing management at federal agencies, demanding improvement action plans and cutting program budgets or eliminate programs entirely.³ President Obama even proposed creating the position of Chief Performance Officer to improve results and outcomes for federal government programs while eliminating waste and inefficiency.

Only 27 percent of Americans approve of government performance

The overwhelming majority of Americans are concerned about the performance of the federal government. National polls found less than one-third, or only 27 percent, of Americans gave a positive rating of the performance of federal government departments and agencies.⁴ The first step to addressing this problem is ensuring that research-based, quantifiable metrics exist to evaluate the effectiveness of programs.

Our national debt now stands at over \$9.9 trillion dollars, which amounts to over \$32,000 per citizen. Furthermore, every child that is born today owes more than \$400,000 as their share of our government’s unfunded liabilities.

If we are to preserve the American Dream for our children, we must ensure our generosity today does not come at the expense of their future standard

1 http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/obama_stop_wasteful_spending.pdf

2 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/2008Performance.pdf>

3 http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/obama_stop_wasteful_spending.pdf

4 “In the Public We Trust”, Partnership for Public Service and Gallup Consulting, November, 2008.

of living. Congress must evaluate the performance of every program across the federal government, based on metrics, and eliminate those that are wasteful, inefficient or not able to achieve results. This is how taxpayers across this nation determine their family budgets, and Congress must learn to prioritize just as Americans families do.