

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
CONGRESSMAN TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, CHAIRMAN



OVERSIGHT HEARING
STATEMENT BY TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, CHAIRMAN

Hearing topic: *Should we PART Ways with GPRA?*
A Look at Performance Budgeting and Program Review

Wednesday, February 4, 2004
2:00 p.m.

Congress enacted the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) more than a decade ago to create an effective, efficient government that produced tangible results – results that would form the basis for budgetary decisions. GPRA was intended to serve as a firm foundation on which to build a structure of performance management.

While GPRA was passed in 1993, it did not take effect in practice until fiscal year 1999. Consequently, we currently have only four years of information on which to judge the Act's effectiveness. GPRA continues to evolve as senior agency leaders better understand the requirements set forth in the Act and said leaders are given the tools for its effective implementation. We are seeing progress. Agency strategic plans are becoming more useful, agencies are becoming more comfortable and competent at managing for outcomes, and agencies are now beginning to scratch the surface of linking performance to budget decisions. Needless to say, however, there is still a long way to go.

Prior efforts to improve government effectiveness, beginning with the Hoover Commission, failed to achieve the important objective of linking performance to budgeting decisions. President George Bush's Management Agenda is the most aggressive attempt by any administration to successfully achieve this goal.

The Administration's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), implemented for the first time last year, seeks to tie funding sources to outcomes at the program level. PART is a key tool, not only in the President's Management Agenda, but also as part of the broader performance-based accountability effort encompassed by GPRA.

GPRA and the President's Management Agenda are mutually dependent efforts, which cannot fully succeed in the absence of the other. In other words, the program-by-program reviews demanded under PART and the broader strategic planning approach emphasized under GPRA are both equally important. With the five-year phase-in of PART across all federal government programs well underway, Congress and the Administration need to work together to ensure that the information gleaned from the PART reviews empowers executive and legislative leaders to make timely, well informed, and sometimes difficult programmatic decisions on behalf of the American public.

Today we will hear from a panel of experts in the field of performance budgeting: Paul Posner, Director of Strategic Issues for the General Accounting Office and the author of the report released last week, Jonathan Breul, Senior Fellow at the IBM Center for the Business of Government, and Maurice McTigue, Director of the Government Accountability Project at George Mason University's Mercatus Center. I would like to thank each of you not only for your time today, but also for your contributions to the base of knowledge in this field.

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