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Promoting Evidence-Building: The Role of Federal Agencies

Keynote Address

Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Policy Conference

December 6, 2016

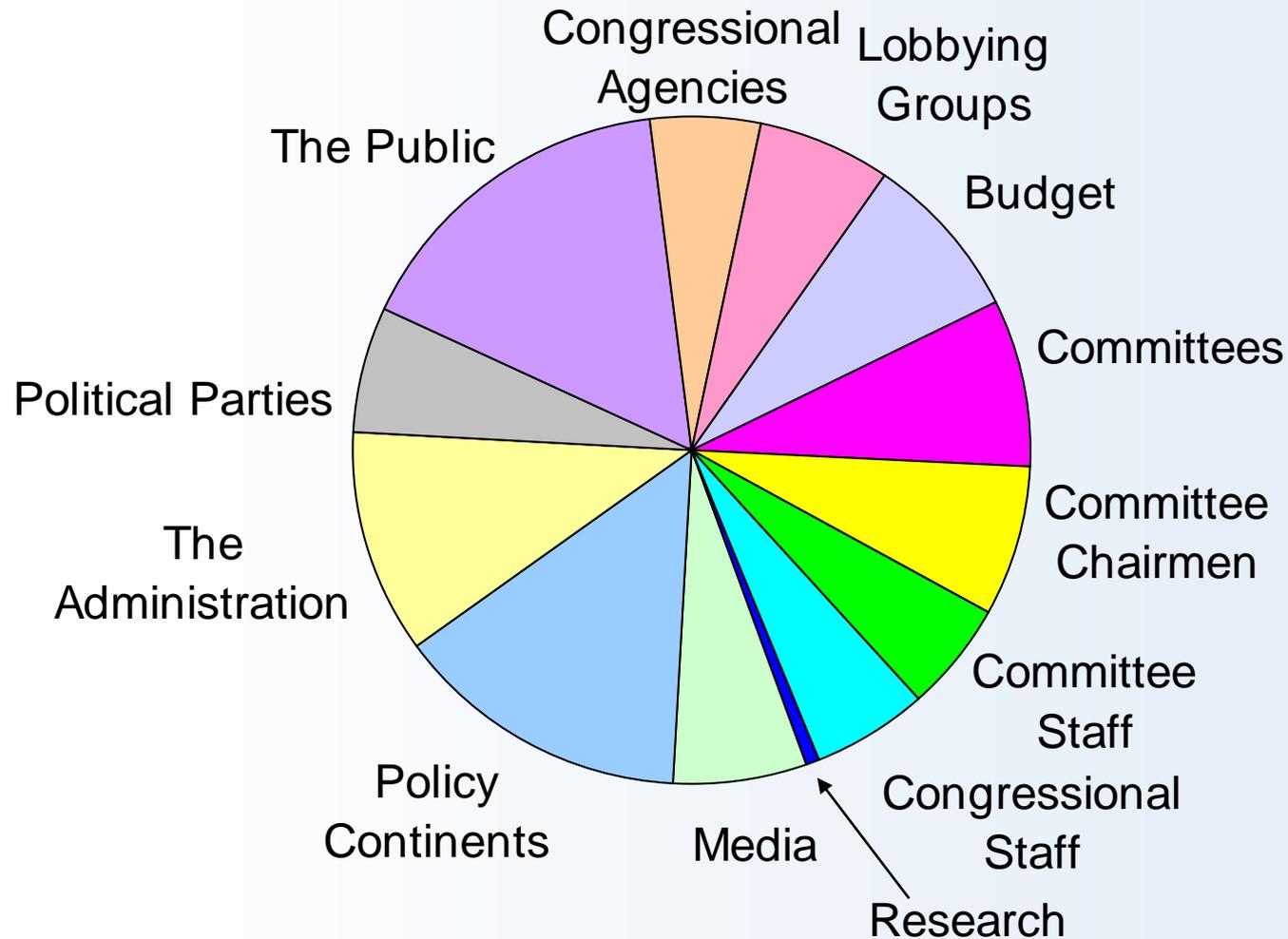
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Model of Factors that Influence the Legislative Process



What I Hope You Hear Today

- Evidence that the evidence-based movement is flourishing
- Successes and efforts of the Obama Administration
 - » Tiered Evidence Programs
 - » Grant Making Strategies
 - » Overview of six key efforts
- Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking
 - » Who we are and what we are doing
 - » Some of what we are hearing
 - » Upcoming agency survey

The Growing Evidence-Based Movement

- Obama Tiered-Evidence Initiatives
- Leadership from OMB
- Institute of Education Sciences
- White House Social and Behavioral Sciences Team
- Evaluation by Federal Agencies
- Research and Evaluation Companies
- J-Pal
- Pay for Success Programs
- Results First
- Clearinghouses
- Foundation Support
- Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission

Obama Evidence-Based Strategy for Grant Making

- Spend most federal grant dollars on evidence-based programs
- Spend some grant dollars on innovative programs
- Continuous evaluation

Tiered Evidence Programs

- What is tiered evidence?
- Major goal of evidence-based movement:
Identify social programs that produce impacts
- Vision: For each major social problem, a set of social programs backed by rigorous evidence
- Vision includes federal money for innovation
- Clearinghouses with information about effective and ineffective programs
- Six tiered evidence initiatives

Federal Grant Programs that Do or Could Fund Evidence-Based Model Programs

- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA; especially Title I)
- Higher Education Act
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention programs
- Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)
- Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and Project-Based Rental Assistance
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
- Community Health Centers
- Maternal and Child Health
- Child Protection Programs (especially Titles IV-B & IV-C of SSA)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Community Services Block Grant

Overview of Six Evidence-Based Initiatives

<i>Evidence-based initiative</i>	<i>Initial funding</i>	<i>Administering agency</i>	<i>Date of first awards</i>
Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP)*	\$110 million	HHS	September 2010
Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting*	\$1.5 billion	HHS	July 2010
Investing in Innovation (i3)	\$650 million	Department of Education	August 2010
Social Innovation Fund (SIF)	\$50 million	Corporation for National and Community Service	July 2010
Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT)	\$2 billion	Department of Labor	September 2011
Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF)	\$125 million	Department of Labor	June 2012

*HHS identified evidence-based programs

What is the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking?

- The Commission is the result of discussions between Congress and the Executive Branch on improving how government uses survey and administrative data
- Making better use of administrative data has tremendous potential to improve how government programs operate
- Created by bipartisan legislation co-sponsored by Speaker Paul Ryan and Senator Patty Murray, enacted March 30, 2016 (P.L. 114-140)

15-Member Bipartisan Commission

President	Katharine Abraham <i>University of Maryland</i> (CHAIR)	Allison Orris <i>OMB</i>	Paul Ohm <i>Georgetown University</i>
Speaker of the House	Ron Haskins <i>Brookings Institution</i> (CO-CHAIR)	Bruce Meyer <i>University of Chicago</i>	Robert Hahn <i>University of Oxford</i>
House Minority Leader	Hilary Hoynes <i>University of California, Berkeley</i>	Sherry Glied <i>New York University</i>	Latanya Sweeney <i>Harvard University</i>
Senate Majority Leader	Kenneth Troske <i>University of Kentucky</i>	Robert Shea <i>Grant Thornton LLP</i>	Kathleen Rice <i>Faergé Baker Daniels LLP</i>
Senate Minority Leader	Jeffrey Liebman <i>Harvard University</i>	Kim Wallin <i>Wallin Ltd.</i>	Robert Groves <i>Georgetown University</i>

What is the Commission working on?

- The Commission has the opportunity to:
 - » Consider how data, research, and evaluation currently are used to build evidence about Federal programs
 - » Consider and make recommendations about how to strengthen evidence-building in the Federal government
- Key Areas of Focus:
 1. Access to survey and administrative data by researchers and program managers
 2. Integration of survey and administrative data
 3. Data security
 4. Incorporation of evaluation in program design
 5. Models for a possible Federal data facility

How is the Commission Considering Privacy?

- Privacy considerations are an important component of the Commission's work
 - » 5 of the 15 Commissioners were appointed based on expertise in “protecting personally-identifiable information and data minimization”
 - » The Commission's Sept. 9 meeting was devoted to key considerations about privacy related to evidence-building
- Privacy considerations will continue to play a substantial role as the Commission formulates findings and recommendations

What is the Role of Evaluation in the Commission's Work?

- Important for the Commission to understand the needs of the evaluation community
 - » Evaluators both inside and outside of government play a central role in generating relevant and rigorous evidence
- The Commission's Nov. 4 meeting focused on issues of concern to evaluators
 - » Nine witnesses described key capacity challenges and opportunities, including those related to collecting and accessing data for evaluation
 - » Numerous other evaluation associations, advocates, and contractors have contacted the Commission to provide suggestions and advice

Role of Federal Agencies in Building Evidence-Based Programs

- Develop evaluation capacity of staff
- Establish Chief Evaluation Officer in all offices that administer social programs
- Develop strategy and skills to help grantees evaluate their programs
- Find Ways to require rigorous evaluations of social programs under agency jurisdiction
- Build access to sources of data for program evaluation (e.g., employment data, wage and salary, educational attainment)

Helping Grantees Conduct Program Evaluations

- Help grantees identify program evaluators (especially companies and universities)
- Help grantees develop staff capacity on program evaluation
- Define outcome measures and how they are to be collected
- Promote common measures across programs with similar objectives

Recommended Improvements in Federal Data for Program Evaluation from Federal Interagency Council on Evaluation Policy

1. Improve the accessibility of federal data for evaluation purposes
2. Ensure that cabinet-level federal agencies have adequate evaluation capacity
3. Ensure that cabinet-level agencies have adequate funding for evaluations
4. Eliminate bureaucratic barriers that discourage evaluation, especially costs
5. Solve unique problems federal agencies have in performing evaluations:
 - a) Help them gain access to data from the National Directory of New Hires;
 - b) Allow administrative data with unique identification and collected in workforce development, education, research grants, public housing, social services and public assistance programs to be linked and shared among federal agencies for evaluation;
 - c) Improve federal agency access to Longitudinal Employer and Household Dynamics (LEHD) files for evaluation;
 - d) Improve access to individual student-level data
 - e) Improve ability of vital statistics systems to be more interoperable with other electronic data system; foster use of national standards on birth and death statistics for evaluation research

Upcoming Agency Survey

- Federal Agencies are a key constituent of the Commission, and we need to understand your views.
- We are preparing a survey of agencies, which will be coming your way in early January.
- Our survey is aimed at the Bureau-level, or the equivalent offices where the evidence building happens.

Goals of Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission

- Promote the access of federal agencies and researchers to federal data sets
- Identify the most important data sets for research and evaluation purposes and the barriers preventing access
- Promote collection of individual data
- Design provisions to allow combining federal data sets
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality
- Identify necessary statutory changes