

May 5, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO: Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM: Dennis K. Rathbun, Director */RA/*
Office of Congressional Affairs

SUBJECT: SENATE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS HEARING, "HAS
GOVERNMENT BEEN 'REINVENTED'?", 5/04/00

The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia held a hearing on the progress of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR) in achieving its goals. Chairman Voinovich (R-OH) commended NPR for its ongoing commitment to reform, noting that it takes time for systemic changes to occur. However, he criticized NPR for claiming executive privilege and refusing to testify.

Noting that reinvention is an ongoing process, the panel of witnesses gave its views on the successes and failures of NPR to date. Donald Kettl from the University of Wisconsin gave NPR a "B" for a strong effort but an incomplete job. NPR was commended for its rhetorical emphasis on the "honorable role" of federal service. GAO commented that savings listed by NPR could "not be fully attributed to reinvention efforts." Many witnesses, as well as Senator Thompson (R-TN), said that the accomplishment of downsizing was not accompanied by "rightsizing," having the right mix of skills. GAO also noted that, despite successes with the reinvention labs fostered by NPR, poor communication about these efforts hampered the spread of best practices. Other criticisms included the lack of attention to GAO's high-risk areas, an antiquated civil service system, inattention to human capital, and the lack of emphasis on "management" at OMB.

Ronald Moe with the Congressional Research Service and Mr. Kettl criticized basing government reform on a private sector model, saying that "customer" was inappropriate when often there is not a customer relationship, and that the private sector's emphasis on maximizing revenue differs from the federal government's emphasis on due process and adherence to the law. Senator Durbin (D-IL) echoed this concern, saying that some items cannot be quantified. Chairman Voinovich responded that "if you can't measure it, don't do it." He added that

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Congress had a role to play in asking nominees government management questions and in using congressional oversight to encourage best management practices.

The witness list is attached; testimony is available in OCA.

Attachment: As stated.

cc: SECY
OGC
OGC/Cyr
EDO
OIP
OCAA
OPA
OIG
CFO
CIO

Witness List

Hearing before the

Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government
Management, Restructuring, and the District of
Columbia

Thursday, May 4, 2000
10:00 a.m.
342 Dirksen Senate Office Building

"Has Government Been 'Reinvented'?"

PANEL I

J. Christopher Mihm
Associate Director, Federal Management and Workforce Issues
General Government Division
U.S. General Accounting Office

Paul C. Light
Vice President and Director
Governmental Studies Program
The Brookings Institution

Donald Kettl
Professor of Political Science and Public Affairs
LaFollette Institute of Public Affairs
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Ronald C. Moe
Project Coordinator, Government and Finance Division
Congressional Research Service
The Library of Congress

Scott A. Hodge
Director of Tax and Budget Policy
Citizens for a Sound Economy