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Congressional Evidence-Based Policymaking Resolution

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This resolution establishes a Congressional Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking to review, analyze, and make recommendations to Congress to promote the use of Federal data for evidence-building and evidence-based policymaking. Overall, a commission can be an effective tool for improving data use in Congress by leveraging outside expertise, promoting cost effectiveness, and generating evidence-based policy recommendations that can lead to positive outcomes for the government and the public alike.

Challenges Facing Congress When Trying to Use Data

One of the main challenges in using data in Congress is obtaining access to relevant data. Often, data are not easily accessible or are siloed within various government agencies, making it difficult for lawmakers and their staff to access and use. Another challenge is ensuring the quality of the data being used. Data may be incomplete, inaccurate, or outdated, which can lead to incorrect conclusions or decisions. Finally, using data effectively in Congress requires adequate funding and resources, including staffing and technology. Without these resources, it may be difficult for lawmakers and their staff to effectively access and utilize data to inform their decision-making.

Why Use a Congressional Commission?

A commission can play a critical role in helping Congress improve its use of data for evidence-building. By convening a group of outside experts and stakeholders, a commission can provide a neutral, independent forum for examining current data practices, identifying areas for improvement, and developing evidence-based policy recommendations.

A Wide Range of Expertise

Commissions can be composed of individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, including data scientists, academics, industry leaders, and other stakeholders with expertise in data management, analysis, and utilization. This can help ensure that the commission's recommendations are grounded in the latest research and best practices, and are tailored to the unique needs and challenges of the congressional context.

Cost Effectiveness

Compared to other approaches to improving data use, such as hiring additional staff or building new data infrastructure, a commission can be a relatively low-cost and efficient way to leverage outside expertise and generate new ideas. Additionally, by providing a neutral, independent forum for exploring data issues, a commission can help identify ways to streamline existing data practices and reduce duplication and inefficiency.

Focus on the Legislative Branch

The Ryan- Murray Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking focused on the need to provide evidence to the Executive Branch in order to inform their policymaking. The recommendations from that Commission resulted in the passage of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, which in turn helped create the National Secure Data Service demonstration project. A new commission that focuses on the legislative branch can help create similar insights focusing on the specific needs of the Congressional policymakers.

Improving Trust in Congress

By expanding its capacity to make better informed decisions, Congress can allocate resources more effectively, improve the delivery of government services, and improve the efficiency of its own operations. Improving Congress' capacity for using data to inform decisions will increase accountability and promote transparency – as such, this resolution can help build trust between Congress and the public, and foster a culture of evidence-based decision-making.