



Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking

# The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking

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APDU Fall Conference, September 13, 2017

Transparency

Humility

**Data**

**Privacy**

**Rigor**

**Capacity**



# What is the Commission?

- The Commission is the result of discussions on ***opportunities for better using evidence*** to inform decision-making, whether in budget decisions or day-to-day management
- Created by legislation ***co-sponsored by Speaker Paul Ryan and Senator Patty Murray***, enacted March 30, 2016 (P.L. 114-140)
- Members appointed by the President, Speaker of the House, House Minority Leader, and the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders – 1/3 on privacy; 2/3 experts on program administration, data, or research
- We provided our report to the President and the Congress on ***September 7, 2017***



# Why Now?

- Government will always ***need relevant, high-quality, and credible evidence***
- Evidence can and ***should be used to help inform policymakers*** about important decisions before they are made, and retrospectively to improve future decisions after they are implemented
- Evidence can support both ***accountability*** and ***continuous learning*** in government



# The Commission's Process

- The Commission engaged in an **8 month fact-finding process** to gather input:
  - 7 Public Meetings with 49 invited witnesses
  - 3 Public Hearings in DC, Chicago, and San Francisco with 37 witnesses
  - Request for Comments in the *Federal Register* with more than 350 submitted comments
  - CEP Survey of 209 Federal offices
  - More than 40 meetings with other groups
- Following public input, the Commission ran a deliberative review process to consider all of the input received and distilled areas of agreement into the Commission's **22 recommendations**



# The Report – Major Themes

- **Improved Access to Data** – Laws and policies are not currently optimized to support the use of data across programs or to maximize privacy
- **Stronger Privacy Protections** – protections today are applied unevenly across government, and not dynamic enough to meet the changing risks associated with the use of data
- **Greater Capacity** – filling the existing capacity gaps across institutions and actors inside and outside government, including the establishment of a single entity to better support access and privacy



# Recommendation Highlights

- **Improved Access to Data –**
  - Establish the National Secure Data Service by bringing together existing expertise (2-1, 2-2)
  - Address inconsistencies and barriers in law for better use of existing data (2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 2-7)
  - Streamline the process by which researchers access data (2-8)
- **Stronger Privacy Protections–**
  - Conduct and disclose comprehensive risk assessments for publicly released de-identified data (3-1)
  - Improve protections with better technology and greater coordination (3-2, 3-3)
- **Greater Capacity –**
  - Strengthen capacity for evidence building, particularly program evaluation, by ensuring sufficient resources and coordination both within and across departments (5-1,5-2,5-3,5-4,5-5)



# Recommendations to Improve Secure, Private, and Confidential Data Access

- Establish a ***National Secure Data Service*** to facilitate access to data for evidence building while ensuring privacy and transparency in how the those data are used.
- Require ***stringent privacy qualifications*** for acquiring and combining data for statistical purposes at the NSDS.
- ***Review and revise laws authorizing Federal data collection and use*** to ensure that limited access to administrative and survey data are possible under strict privacy controls.
- ***Develop a uniform process for external researchers*** to apply and qualify for secure access to confidential government data for evidence-building purposes.



# Recommendations to Modernize Privacy Protections for Evidence Building

- ***Require comprehensive risk assessments on de-identified confidential data*** intended for public release to improve how data are protected and risk is managed
- ***Adopt modern privacy-enhancing technologies for confidential data*** used for evidence building to ensure the government's capabilities to keep data secure and protect confidentiality are constantly improving
- ***Assign senior officials the responsibility for stewarding data*** within government departments
- ***Codifying policies for maintaining integrity and objectivity*** in Federal statistics to promote continued trust in the accuracy of information being used to guide government decision making



# Recommendations to Strengthen Federal Capacity for Evidence Building

- **Identify or establish a Chief Evaluation Officer** in each department to coordinate evaluation and policy research and to collaborate with other evidence-building functions within Federal departments.
- **Develop learning agendas in Federal departments** to support the generation and use of evidence to address the range of policymakers' questions.
- **Improve coordination of government-wide evidence building** by directing OMB to facilitate cross-government coordination.
- **Align administrative processes** with evidence-building activities, including those related to the approval of information collections and the procurement of services for evidence building.
- **Ensure that sufficient resources are available** to support evidence-building activities, including resources to support implementation of the recommendations of the Commission.



## Recommendations Related to State-Collected Administrative Data

- Ensure that ***state-collected administrative data on quarterly earning are available*** for statistical purposes only and made available through a single Federal source.
- Direct Federal departments that acquire state-collected administrative data to make the data available for statistical purposes. Where there is substantial Federal investment in a program, ***Federal departments should, consistent with applicable laws, direct states to provide the data necessary to support evidence building.***

# Recommendations Related to the National Secure Data Service

## Key Functions of the National Secure Data Service



- NSDS should facilitate secure data, with stringent privacy protection standards, develop and implement state-of-the-art methods to safely combine data, and apply cutting-edge technologies
- NSDS should also have capacity to provide technical and analytical services on a fee-for-service basis for states and other jurisdictions

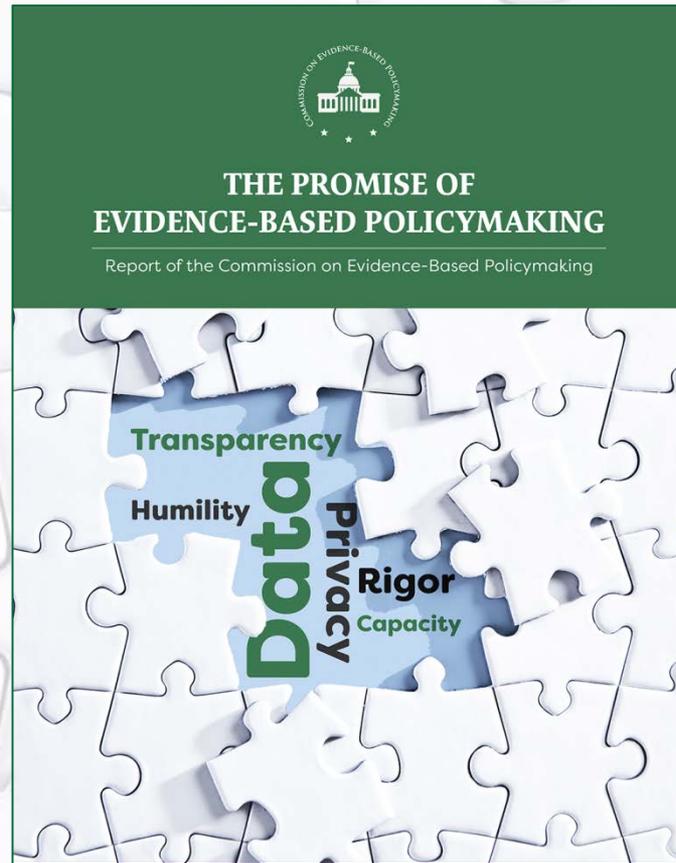


# Where Do We Go From Here?

- The Commission's final report was released on September 7, 2017
- The Commission will sunset on September 30, 2017 at which point the Bipartisan Policy Center will continue to advance the recommendations developed by the Commission
- Legislation is under development and we expect a pending hearing to discuss the report and recommendations
- Most importantly, we encourage all of you to serve as champions for evidence policymaking in your own organizations.



# The Commission's Report



Available at [www.cep.gov](http://www.cep.gov)