

**Hearing on Using Evidence to Help Low-Income Individuals and Families Get
Ahead**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES
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**USING EVIDENCE TO HELP LOW-INCOME
INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES GET AHEAD**

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Human Resources,

Committee on Ways and Means,

Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m. in Room B-318 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Charles W. Boustany, Jr. [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

*Chairman Boustany. The subcommittee will come to order. And I want to welcome everybody to today's hearing. Happy St. Patrick's Day to everyone.

This is the second in our hearing series on welfare reform. And today we will explore what we know about the effectiveness of programs designed to help low-income families get ahead. We have a very talented set of witnesses with us to review what we know about current programs and how they perform, how we can improve that performance to help more families and individuals move up the economic ladder.

But, unfortunately, as we will hear in today's testimony, while we all want to know about whether programs are working or not, and to what extent they are working, what we actually know is quite limited. We just don't have the data. According to two former White House officials -- one Republican and one Democrat -- I quote -- "Based on our rough calculations, less than \$1 out of every \$100 of government spending is backed by even the most basic evidence that the money is being spent wisely."

And among the few programs that have been rigorously evaluated, the evidence suggests most don't work, and don't meet the intended goals. According to nonpartisan experts, since 1990 there have been 10 instances in which an entire federal social

program has been evaluated using the scientific "gold standard method" of random assignment. And of those 10 programs that were evaluated, 9 were found to have weak or no positive effects.

Some programs do worse than just waste money; they may actually harm those they are meant to help. For example, the former Mentoring Children of Prisoners program was intended to support children with an incarcerated parent. However, one in five mentorships lasted less than six months, and research showed such short-term mentoring relationships reinforce feelings of insecurity and abandonment, likely leaving children worse off than they would have been without this so-called benefit. Another program designed to prevent juvenile crime actually increased the chances that participants were later incarcerated. And these are disturbing instances.

Having and using data, data that would not only let us direct taxpayer funds to better uses, but prevent us from causing unintended harm to the very people we want to help, is critically important. Think about the information that many use every day to make the best decisions with their own money.

For instance, if you're my age and your family's washing machine breaks, or you have a car that you want to buy, you might turn to Consumer Reports to find out a reliable replacement. You will be -- at least have information to base your decision-making on. Many people might check online rating services to find the right phone or car for them in today's Internet age. In both cases, consumers have a wealth of data to compare one brand to another, and to make an informed judgement about where their money is best spent. Yet policymakers don't have the same sort of data about the effectiveness of government programs, which millions of families depend upon for both basic financial needs and for the hope of a better life for themselves and their children. And that is just not good enough. We have got to do better.

We are left with more questions than answers. Is the money we are spending today on the best mix of policies and programs to help people get ahead? What are we spending money on now that could be better reinvested elsewhere to get better results? If we had more money to invest, where should we put it? More often than not, we just don't know the answers to these very basic questions.

The bottom line is this: We need to evaluate every program, determine what works, and focus resources on effective programs so more people will benefit from these programs. Low-income individuals and taxpayers alike deserve programs that are effective in promoting opportunity and helping people improve their lives. This effort to fund what works is not about ideology or about cutting spending. It is about doing what is right, it is about a moral imperative, especially for those who need help the most, the help that we are equipped to give, but we need to make sure that that help is effective.

So, I look forward to the testimony from our very accomplished witnesses today.

And, with that, I will turn to my friend and colleague, Mr. Doggett, the ranking member, to make an opening statement.

*Mr. Doggett. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and to our witnesses. I welcome the opportunity to explore evidence-based policies. Indeed, when I first arrived here on Capitol Hill, an old Capitol Hill staffer told me to remember that here, in Congress, every Member is entitled to their own facts. And, through the years, I found that to be increasingly true, that we operate in a largely fact-free environment, where ideology and perhaps political mythology really tends to predominate.

If the question is whether comprehensive immigration reform will grow our economy, we have significant evidence. If the question is whether tax cuts pay for themselves or only add to our public debt, we have significant experience and evidence. If the question is whether human-induced climate change is a serious threat to America, we have significant scientific evidence. And yet, some feel the best policy is to deny it, to prohibit its study, and, in some places, even to prohibit uttering the words "climate change," or "global warming." Or, in the social service area, we have significant evidence on a program such as Abstinence-Only Education, that it is one of the best ways to increase teen pregnancy, rather than to reduce it.

We have the facts. What is not -- we are not lacking evidence. What we are lacking is political will to overcome ideology and rely and act on the evidence.

We also have ample evidence regarding the most effective ways to deliver federal funds to accomplish purposes that we agree upon. If, for example, you want to increase the quality of public education, we have experience in Texas that if you send federal funds to the State of Texas and you have no federal guidelines, and no meaningful requirements that Texas use those dollars to accomplish the intended purpose, that the state will simply use the funds to fill its budget gaps and provide corporate tax breaks.

And the same thing is true if the goal is to increase reimbursements to health care providers under the Medicaid program, that Texas will use all -- or at least much -- of the federal dollars provided not to accomplish the objective, but to fulfill its immediate budget needs. And, while Texas may be an extreme example, the experience that we have had with TANF and the way federal TANF monies have been used by the states to accomplish purposes other than lifting people out of poverty, Texas is not unique.

The approach taken in the bill that is on the floor before us now -- not today, but it has been there and it is set to come back -- on education, if we repeal effectively the civil rights provision of the education -- the secondary -- Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I, and simply give that money to the states to do with as they wish, and not maintain effort, we see a decline in public education quality, not an increase.

As for successful interventions that could come under the jurisdiction of this Subcommittee, I think there are several additional considerations that are important, as we hear from the witnesses.

The first is that we look to the preponderance of the evidence. There will always be outlier studies. But the studies themselves need to be reviewed. And we need -- just as we do with global warming information -- to look at where is the preponderance of the evidence.

The second consideration is that, by its very nature, evidence-based is longitudinal. It is historic. It will tell us how things have worked in the past. It will not necessarily incorporate innovative ideas. For example, we heard from Ron Haskins at our last hearing very compelling testimony about evidence-based support for the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, which I think we certainly need. But that is old evidence, and that doesn't mean that that partnership doesn't need to continue to innovate with technology, like use of Skype, use of other devices that might be available, short of actually having to send a nurse to each family.

And then, that naturally leads to a third consideration, and that is the need for innovation, generally. While we want evidence-based policies, we need to allow, in our funding choices, for some new programs that innovate, that give us new ways to deal with these problems.

And, finally, I think we have to keep into consideration that consulting is a multi-billion dollar industry in this town, and that there is an evidence-based consulting industry. They can bring much value, but we don't want to see dollars devoted only to studying what needs to be done; we want to actually do it. Because evidence is clear on one point: We have a widening gap of inequality in this country, and we need policies to address it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

*Chairman Boustany. I thank the gentleman. Without objection, each Member will have the opportunity to submit a written statement and have it included in the record.

And I also want to welcome our witnesses, remind them that limit -- please limit your oral statements to five minutes. We have your written testimony. And, without objection, all written testimony will be made part of the permanent record.

So, this morning we have some very distinguished witnesses here, who will give us the state of play with regard to evidence and how it is being used or not used in these various programs.

Today we are joined by John Bridgeland, CEO of Civic Enterprises; David Muhlhausen, Research Fellow in Empirical Policy Analysis at The Heritage Foundation; Grover J. "Russ" Whitehurst, Director of Brown Center on Education Policy, The Brookings Institution; and Joan Entmacher, Vice President for Family Economic Security, National Women's Law Center.

We welcome you all, and we look forward to a robust dialogue today. And, with that, Mr. Bridgeland, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF JOHN BRIDGELAND, CEO, CIVIC ENTERPRISES

*Mr. Bridgeland. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Boustany, Ranking Member Doggett, and other distinguished members of this Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the important subject of using evidence to inform budget and policy decisions that can expand opportunity for low-income individuals and their families.

I am a senior advisor to Results for America, a non-profit, bipartisan organization committed to improving the lives of young people and their families through better data and evidence at all levels of government. I also draw my experience as former director of the White House Domestic Policy Council for President Bush, and a former member of the White House Community Solutions Council for President Obama.

At Results for America, we believe all levels of government should follow three principles: first, build evidence about the practices, policies, and programs that achieve the most effective results; second, invest limited taxpayer dollars in what works; and, third, direct funds away from those efforts that consistently fail to achieve measurable outcomes. More than 100 local and national leaders, including U.S. Senators, support these principles.

According to a 2013 GAO report, only 37 percent of program managers said an evaluation of their programs had been completed in the last five years. And another 40 percent did not know whether such an evaluation had even been conducted. The former OMB directors in our coalition estimate that only one percent of federal non-defense discretionary spending is backed by evidence. These and other statistics in my written testimony highlight the bipartisan opportunity to do more to ensure limited resources support solutions that improve outcomes for young people and their families.

When I co-chaired the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth in 2003, we discovered 339 federal programs administered by 12 departments and agencies at a cost of \$224 billion, annually. Although government was collecting data on how much programs cost, and how many people they served, we wanted to know more about how programs were helping to increase opportunity and improve lives. Where evidence was stronger, the President proposed state of the union initiatives that this Congress supported to help disadvantaged youth.

We make the following specific recommendations to build on the bipartisan history of improving government performance.

First, Congress should authorize agencies to invest one percent of their total discretionary funds for program evaluations, subject to congressional oversight, to improve how the other 99 percent of dollars in an agency are spent. The Administration's recent budget request seeks this authority for the U.S. Department of Labor, and also for a particular program within the Department of Health and Human Services. And other agencies should have it, too. If chief evaluation officers were appointed at each agency and held accountable, they would help create a stronger culture of using evidence to inform decision-making.

Second, government should create what-works clearinghouses at agencies to inform better decision-making, and signal the importance of evaluations. I know, from my own experience in working to address the high school dropout challenge, that the what-works clearinghouse and increasingly sophisticated data at the U.S. Department of Education and National Center for Education statistics have helped foster reforms that follow evidence and generate better results. High school graduation rates have reached an all-time high, nationally. And those who have disproportionately had the lowest graduation rates are now driving the most significant gains.

Third, Congress can encourage the use of rapid low-cost tools, including low-cost, randomized control trials to increase the effectiveness of social spending by using data already collected by the Federal Government to measure key outcomes of a particular program, rather than engaging in costly original data collection.

Fourth, Congress should consider a tiered-evidence approach that gives higher levels of funding to grantees with better evidence of impact, and lower levels of funding to promising programs that need to be tested further. Because low-income youth and their families deserve supports that are truly helping them.

Fifth, Congress should encourage programs to first improve, and eventually direct funds away from those that consistently fail to achieve outcomes. Bipartisan Head Start reauthorization required low-performing grantees to re compete for funding. There are other examples of other programs that consistently failed to boost opportunity for youth, and were finally eliminated. But too often, government is flying blind, or failing to use evaluations to expand, alter, or terminate programs.

Finally, Congress should foster a spirit of innovation and learning, not simply pull the on or off funding switch when the evidence isn't clear. When I served on the White House Council for Community Solutions in 2011, we discovered that youth opportunity grants had been eliminated before an evaluation was completed. Evidence later showed the program had increased youth in school, employment rates, and hourly wages. Our council had lost a key tool, both to improve the lives of disconnected youth, and save taxpayers money.

Our bipartisan Moneyball for Government book, and Ron Haskins's "Show Me the Evidence" book contain many recommendations to build evidence.

Finally, our Results for America coalition is pleased to announce today our strong support for the Evidence-Based Policy Commission we understand Chairman Ryan and Senator Murray will be proposing, and for the bipartisan Social Impact Partnership Act sponsored by Congressman Young and Congressman Delaney. Given the opportunity gaps in our society, the millions of vulnerable children and families in our country, the time could not be better to put evidence at the center of policymaking. Thank you.

*Chairman Boustany. Thank you.

Mr. Whitehurst, you have five minutes.

GROVER J. "RUSS" WHITEHURST, DIRECTOR, BROWN CENTER ON
EDUCATION POLICY, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

*Mr. Whitehurst. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, members of the committee. Let me tell you a story.

In a career I had a couple of careers ago, I was a developmental psychologist working in Head Start centers. And one evening I went to a Head Start center at the beginning of the year to make a pitch for parents to sign up their kids to be in one of my studies. I saw a mom in the audience. And, as I was leaving the center in my car, I saw her walking down the road. She had her four-year-old, who she had brought to the center, in hand. She had a two-year-old in a stroller. She had a big bag of materials she had picked up at the meeting. And it was 85 degrees, and she was struggling.

So, I offered her a ride home. She accepted. I thought it would be a few blocks. It was a couple of miles. I asked her had she walked all the way to the Head Start center with her kids. She said she had. I said, "That's a long way to walk; why did you do it?" And she said, "I just want what is best for my babies."

I knew that particular Head Start center pretty well, and it was not providing what was best for her babies. I think there is a moral proposition. You stated it, Mr. Chairman, that we need to provide people who need help programs that work. And we are frequently not doing so. We need to use evidence to move in that direction. I have got some recommendations. I think they are very much in line with what Mr. Bridgeland has just said, and they speak to supply utilization and what the federal role is in using evidence.

On the supply side, in keeping with comments already made, I think we need to fund the evaluation effort better. I think there needs to be a healthy set-aside in every significant funding program to allow that program to be evaluated. If we are spending only as we did in the U.S. Department of Education, less than one percent of the appropriation to find out what works, we are destined to be involved in a faith-based enterprise that is never self-correcting. So an evaluation set-aside is important.

I think we need independence for those who are doing the evaluations. Most federal evaluations are carried out by people who are responsible to and reporting to the political apparatus, and are in the same programs that are implementing the programs that need to be evaluated. That is a conflict of interest. I think we should give each federal agency an evaluation officer, and they have the -- should have the independence we give to the inspector general in those offices.

I think we need greater access to the -- linking access to existing data sets, so we can speed up the rate of progress here. You know, Google conducts about 20,000 experiments a year. During the eight years I was in the U.S. Department of Education, we mounted about 20 experiments around education. So we need more. We need more quantity. One way to do that is to use existing data. It is there, we just don't have a way of putting it together.

The Ryan-Murray Evidence-Based Policy Commission intends, if it is passed into law, to tackle that problem. I think that is perfect, that is the way we need to go. With regard to that Commission, I think its role could be expanded to serve some other functions, if it were a standing commission, and those functions lie in the realm of utilization.

So we need to know what works. And we have some entities embedded in some agencies that are supposed to do that. But the issues with poverty and people in disadvantage are not easily siloed at agencies. They span agencies. And so I think it would be a great idea if the Commission were responsible for collecting and disseminating information on what works with regard to economic opportunity in ways that would inform policymakers, inform Congress, and inform the nation.

And, in that regard, they might make an annual report to Congress indicating what works, what doesn't, what needs correcting. I think this would be useful, politically. Some of you may have been involved in trying to close the military base. You know how hard that is. Try to close a popular social program, and you will find a really tough problem. So some outside advice might be useful.

On the federal role, just because something works, I don't think it is the federal role to push it down and to say that states or people have to use that particular service. I think the ideal role is to find out what works, provide information, and to provide incentives that it is utilized, that it would be utilized at the local level. And one way to do that is to empower consumers to shop for what they want.

I am in favor of, rather than giving most of the money to states or localities, figure out a way to give it to individuals. The Earned Income Tax Credit is one way to do that. Vouchers are another way to do that. Food stamp is a voucher. And then provide the kind of information that, Mr. Chairman, you said you could get in Consumer Reports if you are buying a washing machine, provide that information to consumers, so they can spend those vouchers and those transfer funds correctly.

I think, if you do that, you will generate a marketplace, and people will get not what has been decided at the state level that they should have, but they will get, for example, in child care services, what they need to serve their needs, and that will produce the kind of innovation and progress that we very badly need. Thank you very much.

*Chairman Boustany. Mr. Muhlhausen.

STATEMENT OF DAVID MUHLHAUSEN, RESEARCH FELLOW IN EMPIRICAL POLICY ANALYSIS, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

*Mr. Muhlhausen. My name is David Muhlhausen, and I am a research fellow in empirical policy analysis in the Center for Data Analysis at The Heritage Foundation.

*Chairman Boustany. Mr. Muhlhausen, that microphone on, if you don't mind.

*Mr. Muhlhausen. I thank Chairman Boustany, Ranking Member Doggett, and the rest of the subcommittee for the opportunity to testify today on evidence-based policymaking. The views I express in my testimony are my own, and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

My testimony is largely based on my book, "Do Federal Social Programs Work?" My spoken testimony will focus on four points.

First, the effectiveness of federal social programs is far too often unknown. That is why the notion of evidence-based policymaking is so important to finding out what works and what does not work. The use of scientifically rigorous impact evaluations greatly improve policy decisions. The best method for assessing the effectiveness of federal social programs is large-scale, multi-site experimental evaluations that use random assignment.

Unfortunately, these scientifically rigorous studies are rarely done. When Congress creates social programs, the funded activities are intended to be spread out across the nation. For this reason, federal social programs should be assessed for their national effectiveness. While an individual program operating at a single site may undergo an experimental evaluation, this small-scale, single-site evaluation will not inform policymakers of the general effectiveness of the broader national program.

The success of a single program that serves a particular jurisdiction or population does not necessarily mean that the program will achieve similar success in other jurisdictions or among different populations. Thus, small-scale evaluations are poor substitutes for large-scale multi-site evaluations.

A multi-site evaluation that examines the performance of a program operating in numerous and diverse settings will produce results that are more -- the policymakers. Multi-site experimental evaluations are the best method for assessing the

effectiveness of federal programs. Yet, to date, this method has been done on only a handful of federal programs.

Second, the Federal Government does not have a good record of replicating successful programs on a national scale. Policymakers and advocates often assume the social program that is effective in one setting will automatically produce the same results in other settings. This is a faulty assumption.

For example, for the Center for Employment Training replication, the Federal Government attempted to replicate the successful outcomes of a youth job training program in San Jose, California in 12 locations throughout the United States. A multi-site experiment evaluation found that the Federal Government was unable to replicate the successful outcomes in these other sites. Just because an innovative program appears to have worked in one location does not mean the program can be effectively implemented on a larger scale.

Third, policymakers should be mindful that federal social programs do occasionally produce harmful impacts on participants. However, social program advocates too frequently ignore these findings. Nevertheless, Congress should be aware of these harmful impacts. Here are just two examples.

For the three-year-old -- Head Start Impact Study, kindergarten teachers reported that the math abilities of the children given access to Head Start were worse than similar children not given access to the program.

Students participating in school educational activities under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program were more likely to have disciplinary and behavioral problems, such as getting suspended from school. Further, these students were less likely to achieve at high levels in class, and were less likely to put forth effort in English classes.

Last, the adoption of the evidence-based policymaking is an important step in helping Congress become wise stewards of the federal purse. With the federal debt reaching staggering heights, Congress needs to ensure that it is spending taxpayer dollars wisely. The creation of the Evidence-Based Policy Commission, as proposed by Representative Ryan and Senator Murray, is a step in the right direction. I thank the committee for the opportunity to testify today.

*Chairman Boustany. I thank the gentleman. Ms. Entmacher?

*Ms. Entmacher. Entmacher.

*Chairman Boustany. Entmacher. Thank you. You may proceed.

STATEMENT OF JOAN ENTMACHER, VICE PRESIDENT FOR FAMILY
ECONOMIC SECURITY, NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

*Ms. Entmacher. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Doggett, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the National Women's Law Center.

Millions of women struggle every day to support their families and give their children a chance at a better life. And safety net programs work, and help them lift their families out of poverty.

For example, the Earned Income Tax Credit lifted more than five million people, more than half of them children, out of poverty. SNAP, formerly food stamps, lifted more than 3.6 million people above the poverty line. But the EITC and SNAP don't count as income under the official poverty measure, so the effectiveness of the safety net in reducing poverty is often underestimated.

Research shows multi-generational and lasting impacts from programs that alleviate poverty. For example, the EITC encourages increased work, particularly among single mothers, and leads to higher wages. Moreover, children whose families receive more income from refundable tax credits are healthier, more successful in school, and have increased earnings as adults. Children whose families receive food stamps were healthier, more likely to graduate from high school, and more self-sufficient as adults. And SNAP is an increasingly important work support for low-income workers and their families.

However, there are major gaps in safety net and work support programs. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF, is the core safety net for poor families with children. When it was enacted in 1996, 2 out of 3 poor families with children received assistance. By 2013, only 1 in 4 did. TANF benefits are insufficient to bring a family's income above 50 percent of poverty in any state. So TANF does little to reduce poverty, or even bring children out of deep poverty. When millions of jobs disappeared in the great recession, the response from TANF was weak.

When Congress overhauled the welfare program in 1996, it recognized that parents of young children need child care to be able to work. But federal funding for child care assistance has dropped below the level it was in 2001, taking inflation into account. And the number of children served is at its lowest level since 1998. Only one in six children eligible for federal child care assistance receives it.

Mr. Whitehurst testified about a mother who walked miles to a Head Start center to give her babies what was best. I will take his word for it, that this center that they were going to was not adequate. The key question is, what should policymakers do in response?

I think Congress and the George W. Bush Administration had the right approach when they reauthorized Head Start in 2007. They didn't turn it into a voucher program. We actually have a voucher program, CCDBG, and it was reauthorized last year on a bipartisan basis because it wasn't giving parents access to quality care. But what happened after the Head Start reauthorization was that measures were instituted to improve quality and accountability, as described in my written testimony. And the Obama Administration is continuing the efforts to try, learn from efforts, and hold programs accountable.

But implementing and sustaining quality improvements takes adequate and stable resources. Budget cuts, short-term funding bills, and the threat of sequestration are not conducive to investing in quality. Here are a few examples of programs within the jurisdiction of the Ways and Means Committee where solid evidence calls for increased investments.

One, make the improvements in the EITC and Refundable Child Tax Credits permanent. Failing to do so will push about 16 million people, including 8 million children, into or deeper into poverty.

Two, improve the EITC for childless adults, to increase their work participation and income. That is an idea with bipartisan support.

Three, reauthorize the home visiting program. There is widespread evidence of its effectiveness, yet it is set to expire in just two weeks.

And, third, provide adequate funding to implement the reforms in last year's bipartisan reauthorization of the child care program, so states can improve the health and safety of children and child care without cutting back on the number of children they serve.

These things take money. Where can we find it? Well, we could subject tax expenditures to the same level of scrutiny that is being called for on social programs. According to CBO, the Federal Government spends 1.5 trillion -- with a T -- dollars a year on tax expenditures, more than it spends on Social Security, Medicare, or Defense. And the benefits, according to CBO, disproportionately go to the wealthiest households and large corporations. Trimming tax expenditures by just one percent equals 15 billion a year, or \$150 billion over 10 years. And careful scrutiny would likely produce additional savings.

In short, we have evidence that works, and the resources necessary to make the investments that will help families get ahead.

Thank you.

*Chairman Boustany. Thank you. And, for the record, I want to mention that yesterday Representative Dave Reichert and I introduced the Home Visiting Extension Act of 2015. We are going to reauthorize that.

*Ms. Entmacher. Thank you --

*Chairman Boustany. Because it is a program that is showing promise. And we are hoping to get data toward the end of the year to truly prove that case. So I just wanted to make sure that goes on the record.

I think there is a lot of room for bipartisan agreement here. This is an area that we can make a difference in the lives of many Americans who are struggling. But I think it is -- we have a moral imperative to look at the facts, and to really start to make, you know, heads or tails -- to make sense out of these programs, and what is working.

And I could tell you my previous life was in medicine. I was a cardio-thoracic surgeon. And I remember in 1988 there was an article that came out in the New York Times looking at cardiac surgery programs in the State of New York. And the mortality and morbidity statistics were all over the map. And one of the finest institutions in New York State had some of the worst outcomes, based on that analysis. But it turned out that the analysis was faulty, because they weren't doing risk adjustment. And that particular institution was getting all the difficult cases.

We have, I think, a moral imperative to look at the scientific basis behind this, and to get the data, get the evidence, and use it appropriately. Because, at the end of the day, those on this side of the aisle and those on this side of the aisle want to have programs that work. We owe it to the taxpayer and we owe it to those who are most in need.

Mr. Bridgeland, in your testimony you laid out six points. You have talked at length in your testimony, and you described these in your chapter in Moneyball for Government. But -- and these all make complete sense to me. I think they are common-sense approaches. But, given your experience in the Bush Administration, and now, in your current capacity, working with Results for America on the Moneyball project, help us understand. What are the one or two steps we can start with to really get the ball rolling on this?

*Mr. Bridgeland. Well, first, let me say congratulations on the new information about the expansion of home visiting. We discovered David Olds in Baltimore actually built in evidence at the very beginning of the Nurse Family Partnership Program. Because he did that, because it was subject to randomized control trials, the program has been expanded in 31 states. And now \$1.5 billion across the United States goes to help boost the life incomes -- outcomes for newborn children, their mothers, their health, their employment.

I would say that the nice thing about all the testimony, including your opening statements, is that we need to build an evidence base and be serious about it. Every sector in our country invests billions of dollars in research and development. You talk about Consumer Reports, trying to understand what is it that is going to actually help the people we are trying to serve.

In 2005 I was contacted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and asked if we could look at a -- the first-ever national cross-sample of the more than million young people in this country who drop out of high school every year. And we did a survey and we discovered remarkable things: that most could have made it; that there were significant life challenges that caused them to drop out; that they had big dreams, just like other children.

And I think, Joan, you mentioned in your testimony the power of actually listening to the people that we are trying to help, to see what is the intersection between what a young person faces in school, and why they decide to drop out. And what does the evidence tell us about what will help them stay in school?

I mentioned, obviously, investing one percent -- and that is a significant investment. Imagine if, across every department and agency, we actually had one percent of funds, discretionary funds, invested in evidence base and evaluations. You would eventually have a Consumer Reports and an annual update to the nation on how programs across government are helping to serve low-income youth and families.

Joan mentioned SNAP. I was completely taken by the 2014 longitudinal study. Mr. Doggett, you mentioned the power of longitudinal studies. So SNAP not only helps address severe malnutrition, and give access to alleviate hunger, we now know, from a longitudinal study in the 1970s -- tracked those who had the program to the present day -- that high school graduation rates have increased by 18 percentage points, that the employment rates of the mothers is much higher, and that the welfare receipts are much lower.

You talk about the moral and societal imperative, Mr. Chairman. I would just close by saying there is also an economic and taxpayer imperative. When the White House Council for Community Solutions, we discovered 6.7 million opportunity youth -- young people disconnected from school and work, representing tremendous loss to -- human capital -- to the country, they cost taxpayers \$93 billion every year if we fail to reconnect them. So there is a social, moral, and economic imperative to do better. Thank you.

*Chairman Boustany. Yes. Longitudinal studies are important, because they go beyond just simply a snapshot.

*Mr. Bridgeland. Right.

*Chairman Boustany. They give you real trends, and they allow policymakers to use that information for quality improvement.

Mr. Whitehurst, I -- one of the things that came out of that newspaper article in the New York Times about thoracic surgery programs was the creation of a database that 90 percent of cardiac surgeons participate in now. And I used that, and I had to fight some obstructionists. But in my early days of my practice, we used that to actually implement

significant cost savings and quality enhancement in the hospitals where I worked, achieving a top 100 status in the country for our heart program.

And one of the steps Mr. Bridgeland mentions in his testimony is setting up what-works clearinghouses at each agency to build evidence around interventions that are effective and those that are not. And you have done this. You have gone through this at the Department of Education. So could you talk to me about some of the challenges you faced as you went through this process?

*Mr. Whitehurst. I am glad to try to do that. There were significant challenges.

The first was to convince people there was any reason to do this. There was an assumption that we know what works in education, we just need to spend on it. And, in fact, we knew almost nothing about what works. And that was one of the challenges of creating the what-works clearinghouse.

Mr. Bridgeland and I were talking before the meeting, that Secretary Spellings for a while called it the nothing-works clearinghouse, because we were spending a lot of money on it, and weren't finding anything that worked. So the first challenge is convincing people that, actually, evidence is extremely important. And it is a first-order investment, if you are delivering social and education programs.

The second challenge was to build something that was -- could survive the almost-certain attacks that would come from those whose oxes [sic] were gored. And so, we couldn't have just a bunch of people sitting around a table, talking about it, and deciding, based on their own views, that this program works and that program doesn't. So we had to build a rule-based system that was reliable, such that anybody could take the same rules, and, if they were well trained, come to the same conclusions. And that wasn't an easy technical job.

The third challenge was to create an interface to this information that people would actually access and use. And I think that continues to be a challenge for the what-works clearinghouse. I haven't been associated with it for six years now. It is better than it used to be, but it is still written more for researchers than it is for ordinary consumers.

And I think the final challenge is to pull together and make some sense not only of whether particular programs or interventions work, one by one, but what is the appropriate policy stance to take with respect to those findings. And it is difficult for a Federal Government agency to do that, because you are going beyond strictly the information given to recommendations that are, essentially, political, as to what needs to be done with that.

So, you know, I think that is a missing element here, and maybe is something that a Commission on Evidence-Based Policy could address, that an individual agency-based what-works clearinghouse could not. Thank you.

*Chairman Boustany. Thank you.

Mr. Doggett?

*Mr. Doggett. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a new report out this morning from the Center for Budget and Public Policy Priorities, indicating that the safety net lifted 39 million Americans out of poverty in 2013.

And I would ask that a summary of that report be made a part of that record.

*Chairman Boustany. Without objection.

[The information follows: [The Honorable Mr. Doggett Submission](#)]

*Mr. Doggett. And let me ask you, Ms. Entmacher, about that. For all of the problems, the inefficiencies, and the need to seek improvement, what is the effect likely to be of having substantial cuts to that safety net program of the type that -- we will get shortly the Republican budget for this year -- but the Republic budget for last year had, I believe, some 69 percent of its cuts from these low-income programs, including the SNAP program we have heard about this morning. What would be the effect on the inequality gap that this country has already, and on those poor families, if we make those type of cuts in the budget?

*Ms. Entmacher. It is really frightening to contemplate what the effect would be. I mean the first thing we know is that cuts that focus on programs for low-income people would fall most heavily on women and children who are the large majority of poor people in this country, and the people who rely most on these safety net programs.

I talked about deep poverty. These are families who are living with incomes below 50 percent of the poverty line. For many of them, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families does not exist. It is gone. The only thing they had when they couldn't find jobs during the great recession, and they couldn't get unemployment insurance because they didn't qualify, or it had run out, and they couldn't get TANF, all they had was SNAP. And SNAP helped. It really was effective, because it was automatically there when need increased. And during part of the great recession, benefits were increased, so at least these families could get food on the table.

It is really frightening to imagine what will happen when that goes away. And we have heard -- Mr. Bridgeland just talked about what a difference it makes to have children and people who are trying to get jobs have an adequate diet. You can't go to work if you are hungry, if your kids are hungry. You can't go to work with a child in tow. You can't, you know, take a baby to a job interview. You are not going to get hired. So we really need to maintain a strong safety net if we want families to get ahead.

*Mr. Doggett. And I suppose, just generally, the question on evidence-based evaluations is whether the goal is to enhance, to strengthen, the improve, see that the

taxpayer's money is well spent, and we accomplish the maximum good, or whether it is the conclusion that it is just not worth spending any money in this area, and the goal is to terminate, cancel, and cut, which seems to be the approach taken in this unfortunate Republican budget.

Let me ask you also -- several of you referred to the family visiting programs, and I am pleased to hear for the first time that the chairman and the former chairman of this Committee intend authorization legislation. It was a real struggle to get the funding for that program through the next two weeks last year. We couldn't get more than another year extension. And now we are two weeks away from a program that has broad support, and all that is being suggested, unlike the permanent answer for health care providers in the proposed SGR fix, is another two years.

Does this stop-start lack of certainty about a program that does enjoy broad support, evidence-based support -- even though we don't have the final evaluation in that was originally incorporated in the legislation, we do have other evidence of it -- what is the effect on programs like home visiting, family visiting, of approaching its funding in that way?

*Ms. Entmacher. Well, actually, Mr. Chairman, I am not as familiar with the home visiting program as I am with the Head Start program, where the National Women's Law Center went back and documented the effect of sequestration, which actually happened in 2013. And programs, first of all, had to turn away increased numbers of children. They had to cut back on the number of staff. They had to cut back on the supplies, books, and instructional materials they had for children. They had to cut back on the number of hours that they were open. And we know that additional instructional time is very important to children's success in these programs.

So, having -- you know, when we find what is important to a program's success, it is important to have both adequate resources and stable resources, so programs can improve.

*Mr. Doggett. Thank you.

*Chairman Boustany. Before I turn to Mr. Young I just want to offer a little bit of clarification. We have heard some suggestion that this is all about a budgeting cutting exercise, and I cannot be more emphatic that it is not about simply that. We have a moral obligation, as policymakers, to help those in need, and to make sure that the programs that we are using taxpayer dollars for actually work, and get the intended effect.

And we are not going to do this overnight; this is going to be a long-haul process, which I think has largely been neglected over a number of years. So we start with evidence, and we start with how to use it, and hopefully start to move the needle to getting effective programs to really help those who are in need.

And, with that, I will turn to Mr. Young.

*Mr. Young. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an essential hearing. It is one that, frankly, I wouldn't mind if it lasted all day. I find it so important. I think members of staff and some of the other attendees would be less enamored of that idea. But I appreciate all of you being here today.

So, our focus is, as the chairman said, trying to figure out how we can get the most return on our investment, to the benefit of the beneficiaries and, really, to the benefit of broader society. And so, let me emphasize the extent to which we could all benefit from focusing more on the evidence about what works, what doesn't work, rigorously evaluating all these programs in the future.

I read Robert Putnam's book over the weekend, his new "Our Kids" book. He's a communitarian, he teaches at Harvard School of Public Policy, and has some interesting perspectives on different things. And I thought he made a compelling point in there. Perhaps I found it compelling because I just wrote a column on the very same topic, which will appear in National Review. And I know my good colleagues will be reading that in coming days.

[Laughter.]

*Mr. Young. But the point is, to distill it in sort of my language, I will borrow from John F. Kennedy, "A rising tide lifts all boats." So I think, to the extent we can get the economy moving more quickly, that is the best thing we can do to benefit all our children, all individuals in this country, and so forth, whatever their circumstances.

But some boats do need patching, right, to get them involved in this growth that we hope we will enjoy in the future. And, to the extent that we can get more of those boats rising, the tide will actually begin to rise faster, as more people get involved in productive activities, as they can make their own way in life, and realize their own human potential.

So, that goes back to a point about using evidence. I actually think -- and I am speaking only for myself in this regard -- but if I have compelling evidence that a program works, I am prepared to spend more money on that program in the future, if it is a real positive ROI. So this could be a revenue-neutral exercise. I don't anticipate this to be a budget-cutting exercise. I actually think the argument becomes more compelling to invest in effective social programs in the future.

Now, that will only be possible if we get our economy moving faster. It is going to require some structural changes to other policies, like tax reform. It is going to require that we make some very tough decisions related to making the largest programs of government solvent. And so we need some leadership from all sides on those issues. So they are all interconnected.

What happens -- I will pose this question to Mr. Bridgeland in my limited time remaining here -- what happens when a program doesn't work? Is it improved, in your

experience? Is it ended? Do we continue to fund it? Maybe you could share one example for speaking generally to that issue.

*Mr. Bridgeland. I just have to say Dr. Putnam is a member of our policy council, we work very closely with him. And "Our Kids" is actually a frightening indictment of the state of the access to the American Dream, and I hope required reading for all of us.

Thank you for your question. I think, consistent with what the chairman and Mr. Doggett have said, we want to create an environment of continuous learning, and not too quickly just pull on and off switches. I think it is important to look at the quality and sophistication of the evaluations. But there are examples. I will give you one.

I worked a lot in prison reform and with children of incarcerated parents. And this Scared Straight program had multiple evaluations across many sites, showing that those young people at risk have actually -- entering the juvenile justice system -- when they met with inmates the evidence showed that they had a 28 percent higher rate of committing crime, higher rates of recidivism. And the studies were sound, so sound that the U.S. Department of Justice actually issued guidance across the country that funding for Scared Straight ought not to continue.

There was another program where I thought the evidence was strong, but the program could have been improved before it got eliminated. The Even Start Family literacy program was the subject of three national evaluations. It showed that those in the treatment group who actually had the literacy interventions with their parents did no better than the control group. That program went on to spend \$1 billion over the next 8 years. And think about the opportunity cost to young people. I wish that investment had been made in the Reading Recovery program, which, since 1984, has reached 2 million young people, and boosted their literacy rate significantly.

So, when the chairman talks about this isn't a budget-cutting exercise, he is exactly right. It also can be a bipartisan exercise, looking at the programs that are effective, and then also those programs that clearly aren't working, and perhaps redirect funds from those programs into those that do.

*Mr. Young. So, to take that term, "opportunity cost," you are essentially saying that, by continuing to invest in a sub-optimal program, we are actually -- as any economist would view this -- we are hurting --

*Mr. Bridgeland. Correct.

*Mr. Young. -- other recipients of better programs. Thank you, and I yield back.

*Chairman Boustany. Mr. Meehan.

*Mr. Meehan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to attach myself to the chairman's words underscoring that our objective here is not just simply to cut spending, but to find the most effective way we can use those resources.

I had a great experience in an earlier, prior life as a county district attorney working with intervention programs. And many of these things do work, and it was attaching to those that can have an impact, as we are working through. But I also remember in college reading the institutional imperative. Once something is created in government, it continues to exist on its own. So, finding the sweet spot here is really a key thing. And I am intrigued by this discussion.

One of the programs that I often hear discussed is the Head Start the early intervention with the children. My school teachers tell me that it is an effective program, and really important because, if they could do one thing, it would be to intervene at that age. But later -- it catches up.

Mr. Whitehurst, what is there about the program that is good, and what is problematic?

*Mr. Whitehurst. Actually, very strong research on Head Start, the National Head Start Impact Study, which was planned in the Clinton Administration, carried out in the Bush Administration, reported in the Obama Administration, nationally representative, every Head Start center was represented in the draw of participants, if they were over-subscribed -- that is, if there were more families who wanted to get in than not, and there was random assignment based on that over-subscription.

There were some effects, modest effects, at the end of the Head Start year, whether it was for three-year-olds or four-year-olds. But, in kindergarten through third grade, nothing. So, just no impacts at all --

*Mr. Meehan. And those students did not --

*Mr. Whitehurst. Do better.

*Mr. Meehan. -- ahead, they did not do better after third grade?

*Mr. Whitehurst. They didn't do better after kindergarten, and they were followed through third grade. And no positive effects. No difference between the kids who were randomized and -- versus those who lost the lottery and had to get whatever they could get on their own resources.

So, that is a great disappointment. I helped plan the study, and I thought we would find positive effects. We did not. And so it suggests, I think, that we need to look very carefully at that investment.

*Mr. Meehan. How do we -- the problem when we are dealing with children at that critical age is we lose more if we continue to try to figure out what is work -- what will -- how do we find out, and do these kinds of testing in a real way, so that we can take advantage of the programs that work in a timely fashion?

*Mr. Whitehurst. Sure. I think that some states are leading in the effort to tie children's school readiness when they begin kindergarten to the experiences they had in center-based care during the pre-K period, so they can identify the centers that are doing a good job, and shut down the ones that are doing a bad job. I think that is important.

I think if we knew that, and made that information available to parents, so they could shop for a good child care center, just as they can shop for a car or a cell phone plan --

*Mr. Meehan. But a lot of these are school-based. I mean it is very, very difficult to have a program that may or may not be consumed by the students.

*Mr. Whitehurst. Well, in the pre-school period, actually, most of the providers are not school-based. They are non-profits, and some for-profits, and -- who --

*Mr. Meehan. Well, that variable there, is that part of the problem, that you have got a lot of different providers operating them in different fashions?

*Mr. Whitehurst. I think certainly the variability in quality is a huge problem. We actually don't know much about it. This is an area in which we know almost nothing. We have no information systems, we don't collect data. And so we are left with people having strong views, but not a strong basis on which to improve what is out there.

*Mr. Meehan. I just have two more inquiries. One just generally for the panel, and then, Ms. Entmacher, I have a closing request for you.

Is there -- unfortunately, a lot of times we look at programs in isolation. And the children are being exposed to a broad spectrum of things. As we have said, the safety net has good parts and bad parts. How do you isolate and determine what works and what does not when you have an overall package of goods?

*Mr. Whitehurst. Well, you do it through a randomized trial, or the best approximation you can. So, with the Head Start National Impact study, all these kids were subject to and supported by the safety net. Some got access to Head Start, and very equivalent children and families did not. And so that is how you start to tease out the effect of the particular components of the overall safety net.

This is not to say that pre-K for four-year-olds -- that the service for four-year-olds is unimportant; it is very important. It is to say, however, that Head Start doesn't seem to be doing the job of preparing children for school as we think it does.

*Mr. Meehan. Mr. Bridgeland, you may answer that. But, Ms. Entmacher, I -- one of the issues that concerns me when I look at this -- and we looked at programs -- the biggest factor, as I understand it, is a child growing up in a single-parent household. And that is the biggest challenge, because so many other factors impact it. What are we doing about the spouse who is not the caregiver, and responsibility on that part, so that there is a continuing obligation on the non-custodial spouse to play a role and be responsible for some of the outcomes for the children?

*Ms. Entmacher. Thank you. Actually, child support enforcement was one of the issues that I worked on starting 20 years ago, when I first came to Washington. And the program, at that point, was very ineffective in helping get support from the non-custodial parent. And --

*Mr. Meehan. Effective?

*Ms. Entmacher. Ineffective. Fewer than one in three children who are in the program received any support from the other parent. And there was a long process. I testified before this Subcommittee on a number of occasions, talking about what was needed to improve the programs. There had been commissions that identified the problem of interstate child support enforcement. Parent moved to another state, state programs didn't have a way of tracking it.

So, Congress addressed that issue with a number of mandates that required states to collect and share information; learned from states what were the best practices in collection, automatic wage withholding, required states to implement that. The improvements were part of the 1996 law. They had an effect, but not quite enough.

In 1998 Congress looked at the incentives in the program and said, "We need better performance indicators, and performance indicators that will drive collections for the hardest-to-serve children, children whose parents were never married, who were poor, and reward states for those incentives." That was adopted, the program continued to improve. And the biggest collection gains were for low-income children.

Unfortunately, Congress let lapse some of the increased incentive rewards that had helped drive those performance indicators. But I think, you know, we are -- you know, we have made progress in trying to get children support from both parents. But, clearly, it is much tougher to be both the primary breadwinner and caregiver, and we need to support those families.

*Chairman Boustany. The gentleman's time has expired. We will go to Mr. Davis next.

*Mr. Davis. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and let me thank you for calling this hearing.

As one of the authors of the evidence-based provisions of MIECH, the home visiting program, I am delighted to have a discussion on how policy helps to shape decisions. I must begin by stressing that Congress should extend the MIECH program as a part of the upcoming doc fix, as we call it.

In Fiscal Year 2014, home visiting programs served approximately 115,000 parents and children, 514 of whom engaged with the Southside Early Learning Network program in my congressional district, one of the six MIECH sites in Illinois. In addition to directly helping almost 1,000 parents and children in Illinois, a remarkable success of MIECH is the outstanding coordinated home visiting system in the state. We must continue to fund this historic investment in evidence-based policy, and I am delighted to know that we are approaching reauthorization.

I also mentioned two evidence-based programs on which I am working. In line with the goal of this hearing, I have a bill that requests the National Academy of Sciences to make recommendations to reduce child poverty, based on the evidence of what works. By charging the National Academy with recommendations, we take the politics out of it, and focus more directly on the science. This model worked well on criminal justice reform, and I think applying it to child poverty makes a great deal of common sense.

Further, I have a bill that draws on what works in teen pregnancy prevention, to reduce teen pregnancies among foster youth to help delay pregnancy until the youth are ready to be parents. Nearly half of all teen girls in foster care have been pregnant by age 19, compared to only 27 percent of their non-foster care peers. Moreover, youth in care are more likely than their peers to have a second pregnancy by age 19. Despite these numbers, federal child welfare policy lacks evidence-based interventions to help these youth delay pregnancy until they are ready to be parents.

Ms. Entmacher, could you comment on this evidence-based approach, and how policy to support low-income youth and families through programs like home visiting, child poverty reduction, reduction, and teen pregnancy prevention [sic]?

*Ms. Entmacher. Yes. The evidence shows, just looking at the reduction in teen pregnancy, that there are, you know, effective interventions. Certainly providing family planning services free of cost to low-income people has been remarkably effective.

And a recent evaluation of family planning services for low-income women found that not only was it effective in reducing unintended pregnancy, which was the primary goal, there were multiple other health benefits which produced cost savings that people who did not have multiple pregnancies that they did not want, they -- the women were in better health, the babies that they did have intentionally were in better health. And, again, those early health outcomes helped them succeed better in life, as well as providing more economic security for their families, because they were able to avoid unintended pregnancy.

On the other hand, as Mr. Doggett has indicated, the success of abstinence-only program, you know, it was -- you know, those programs have not been proven effective. So I think, clearly, that one of the provisions of the Affordable Care Act, you know, would ensure that contraceptive services are available. Some of the most effective provide long-term contraceptives, if that is what women want, so that they can truly intentionally decide when they are ready to have a baby. They cost a little more up front, but could be extremely cost-effective in the long term. So I think this is why that provision is important, and supporting it is important.

*Mr. Davis. Thank you very much. And, Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to hear you and other members of the committee emphasize that this is not a budget-cutting exercise, although we expect to receive, and I guess we may be receiving at any minute, the budget that is being proposed. And I can't help but remember that last year 69 percent of the proposed cuts would have come from programs that are designed to assist low-income individuals and families. So I appreciate your emphasis that this is not about budget cutting, but finding the best solutions and the best results.

*Chairman Boustany. I thank the gentleman. Mrs. Noem, you are recognized.

*Mrs. Noem. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a very important hearing, specifically, because not only are we looking at our programs, but then we are trying to identify some solutions, and then hold the programs accountable to those solutions.

I live in the State of South Dakota. Our state unemployment is around three percent, so very low. But I have portions of my state that have 90 percent unemployment. And those are mostly on Native American reservations that have struggled for decades to be successful and stimulate economic development and help their families get to a position to where they can truly provide for themselves and their children.

And so, for me, this is critically important, that we not just continue to rubber-stamp programs, but that we evaluate them to see if they are fulfilling goals and actually helping people not just create a better situation for them and their children, but for their grandchildren, and their grandchildren's children, because that is how long these communities and these families have been in poverty and have struggled.

And I was very interested to hear Mr. Whitehurst talk a little bit about how he had a vision for some federal programs that currently are operating right now changing to somewhat of a voucher system, just because what I have seen in South Dakota many times is not only does a lot of the dollars in a federal program get eaten up administratively at the federal level, but if we send them to the states at times, the states can eat up a certain portion, as well, that doesn't reach people. And even if you send them to local governments, then a portion of those dollars are gone, and they never touch the individuals, particularly, that need it the most. And it is so watered down by the time it gets there, that it is not enough to truly make a difference.

So, I was wondering if you would identify a program for me that you think really could work in that kind of a system, where it could be a program established by Congress or today that is working -- or, not necessarily working, but funded -- that could work better or be much more effective, potentially, as an individual voucher program.

*Mr. Whitehurst. Sure. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is up for reauthorization. You know, I would like to see the federal dollars that currently go to states and districts to support low-income children, I would like to see that voucherized. A more popular term is a "scholarship." But the point is that the money follows the student to a school that the parents want for their child. And -- and this is an important "and" -- and that is accompanied by information that helps parents know where the good schools are, and provides access to them. I think that could be important.

I would like to see Head Start work that way. The Child Care Development Block Grant program is an effective voucher. But by the time the states are done with it, there is often not enough money that gets to the parents for them to shop for adequate services. So they buy child care on the cheap, and there are consequences of doing that.

There is roughly \$22 billion a year that the Federal Government spends on early child care for the disadvantaged. But it is spread through over 40 programs. The money gets eaten up and distorted and pushed in directions that don't really help the families. And I think people can shop, if you give them the resources to shop, and information. And we get innovation out of that, that we don't get out of ossified government programs that will change, if they ever change, over a 25-year period.

So, I -- you know, my approach is to try to think of how a marketplace could solve the problem. It will be a marketplace that needs regulation and information, and sometimes won't work. But I don't think we tried that in a lot of social programs, and I think we should.

*Mrs. Noem. Well, I think it is interesting, because, in some of the areas that I am speaking about, there is not necessarily those services there today. There may be an early childhood program that is failing right now, but there is not necessarily another entity there to create that kind of competition. But if there was children there, and families who had vouchers that could give their kids a choice of where to do it, there may be more services come into that area because of that situation.

*Mr. Whitehurst. Yes, I think so.

*Mrs. Noem. And that is a definite change that I think would be generational.

*Mr. Whitehurst. Yes.

*Mrs. Noem. Mr. Bridgeland, I would like to ask you, particularly. Do you think that programs, when they are established, have goals? And when they do have those goals,

what percentage of them tend to stay true to the goals under which they were established? Or what is the percentage of failure rate?

*Mr. Bridgeland. I am so glad you asked that, because we talk so much about the power of evaluation and evidence. But when the performance assessment rating tool was developed by the Office of Management and Budget in 2003, we looked at more than 1,000 programs. And it wasn't just, "Does this particular program have an evidence base?" We actually wanted to know what is the concrete goal of the program, what is the strategy to actually meet that goal, what is the implementation plan, who will be managing this program, and then, what does the evidence tell us about the effectiveness of not just the policy and the practice, but the strategy to reach the goal.

The other thing I wanted to highlight, to reinforce what Mr. Whitehurst said, and your excellent point about having these programs and policies actually reach children and families, is that when I was on the White House Council for Community Solutions under President Obama, we visited 36 communities across the country, and we asked them, "What do you need most from the Federal Government?"

And, honestly, I expected people to say more funding. And in every single community they said, "The eligibility requirements, the use of funds, the government oversight, the rules and regulations are paralyzing us. If we could actually have a more holistic approach, and look at these young people we are trying to help in a way that is not so siloed and so programmatic, we could do a better job boosting their outcome."

So, I think Russ's -- Mr. Whitehurst's idea of having linkages between what-works clearinghouses across departments and agencies that look at the intersection of various programs, whether it is home visiting with early childhood, with dropout prevention programs, would be a more effective way for the government to analyze effectiveness.

*Mrs. Noem. Thank you.

*Chairman Boustany. Mr. Holding, you are recognized.

*Mr. Holding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The -- Mr. Bridgeland, you have referenced in your answer to a previous question, you know, two programs that you found, Scared Straight and the Even Start family literacy program, as two that, you know, evidence showed, you know, were not working. What happened to those programs, at the end of the day?

*Mr. Bridgeland. Yes. So the Scared Straight program is still in existence, although the U.S. Department of Justice has issued guidance highlighting the evidence from the Campbell Consortium, Vanderbilt University, and a report to the Congress with 500 indications of the fact that this program resulted in a 28 percent higher rate of crime and recidivism than those in the control group.

The Even Start family literacy program was the subject of three national evaluations, each showing that the children and the parents did no better, in terms of their literacy outcomes, than the control group. Congress went on to spend, over the next eight years, \$1 billion on that program. It was finally eliminated. And, as I mentioned previously, it would be great if those funds, from the perspective of young people, had been redirected toward the Reading Recovery program, which evaluations have shown have significantly boosted literacy rates.

*Mr. Holding. You also referenced that you and your organization have looked at 1,000 other programs to evaluate what their goals are --

*Mr. Bridgeland. Yes.

*Mr. Holding. -- you know, are there any evidence to suggest they are achieving those goals. You know, out of that, the 1,000 that you evaluated, what is the percentage that were successful and still going on, and what is the percentage that have been ended after a demonstration that they are unsuccessful?

*Mr. Bridgeland. So the part -- the performance assessment rating tool examined more than 1,000 programs. And 19 percent were found to be effective. So less than one in five were found to be effective programs when examining their goals, strategy, implementation plan, and the evidence behind them. Our former --

*Mr. Holding. Do you have a dollar figure on the 81 percent that were found to be ineffective --

*Mr. Bridgeland. I will tell you --

*Mr. Holding. -- in terms of the --

*Mr. Bridgeland. -- Mr. Holding, I -- it is, literally, billions and billions of dollars. I did co-chair the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth, and we discovered 339 federal programs across 12 departments and agencies spending \$224 billion every year. And really, the President had asked us to surface initiatives to help boost opportunity for low-income children and their families. And we were able to identify a number of programs. Home visitation was one of them, Nurse-Family Partnership. Some of the early Head Start programs had some evidence of effectiveness with some fade-out effects.

But, unfortunately, many of these programs, we just couldn't tell from the evidence. We knew a lot about their cost, we knew a lot about how many people they served. But too often, we didn't know enough about what was the impact on opportunity --

*Mr. Holding. Is there any good exemplar of a federal program that has a mechanism within the program itself?

*Mr. Bridgeland. Yes.

*Mr. Holding. Where evidence is going to be continuously and rigorously reviewed? And, you know, that is the trigger to recommend continued funding --

*Mr. Bridgeland. Yes.

*Mr. Holding. -- or the trigger to recommend --

*Mr. Bridgeland. So the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act in the Department of Labor for community colleges is a tiered-evidence approach, which basically builds in evidence, requires third-party evaluations, and then gives more funding to those programs that have better evidence. The Social Innovation Fund at the Corporation for National Community Service is another example, and the Workforce Innovation Fund.

And I think both Chairman Boustany and Mr. Doggett emphasized the importance of creating an environment of innovation. You talk to social entrepreneurs who are solving these problems all across the country, they are building in evidence into the programs that -- just as Congressman Davis had built in a mechanism for home visitation at the outset of the program. And it builds support for the program over time, and it also enables us to learn what works.

*Mr. Holding. And this is for the panel. Are there any examples in the private sector that you can think of that would be analogous that have good evidentiary-based review systems built within their program that you can throw out there?

I believe someone mentioned they Googled, it is 20,000 a year. But some other --

*Mr. Whitehurst. Right. Well, there is a huge industry that serves industry, running quick, randomized trials to find -- A/B comparisons, they are called -- to find out -- there are two ways of doing it -- which one works better. And the tech industry does this all the time. They can do it, because we are sitting there, clicking, and it is -- they have just got to do it two different ways, and see which works best.

So, if you are -- you see a big advertisement for a foot-long sandwich, or the nine-inch sandwich, or the four-inch sandwich, you can bet that has been tried, and they know which link that -- the sandwich you are most likely to pay for. So it is endemic, particularly in the tech industry, that we don't do it in government or social services means that they learn and we don't.

So we desperately need to infuse into the government provision of services the ability to collect that information, analyze it quickly, do A/B comparisons, and move forward.

*Mr. Holding. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

*Chairman Boustany. I thank the gentleman. Let's go to Mr. Lewis next.

*Mr. Lewis. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank each one of you for being here today.

Could you tell me, members of the panel, what does the evidence show is the result of letting important safety net programs expire, elapse? Do we have any evidence?

*Ms. Entmacher. Well, I think the experience, particularly during the recession, but -- of the increase in child poverty, and the number of children living in deep poverty, showed that TANF worked very differently in the late 1990s, when jobs were available, the Earned Income Tax Credit had been increased, and the combination of factors of the strong economy, work incentives, and, yes, some of the changes in TANF, increased the employment of single mothers, and led to a decline in child poverty.

But when economic circumstances changed, jobs were harder to come by, jobs were disappearing, welfare mothers had to compete with people who had college educations who couldn't find jobs, either. And the safety net had disappeared.

States -- TANF is structured so that states are rewarded for cutting their welfare rolls. Even the work participation requirements are based on the number of TANF recipients that you have working over the number of TANF recipients. Well, in some places -- and South Dakota is a good example -- it is hard to find jobs for people. It is really tough. In a recession it is really tough. So, how do you keep your work participation rates up? You cut back the denominator. You don't serve the hardest-to-serve people.

And I know Mr. Haskins, who has testified many times before this Committee, has talked about the fact that there is a large group of what are often referred to as disconnected people, people who are not getting help from any -- certainly not getting help from TANF, maybe getting a little help from SNAP. During the recession, the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund created jobs for people who couldn't find work. It was effective, but then it was abandoned.

So, I think, you know, we need to see that we have our incentives right, and programs designed so they can quickly respond to people in need.

*Mr. Lewis. Let me just ask -- I know you all are experts -- this morning. Have any of you ever had the ability, had an opportunity to walk in the shoes of the people that depend on these safety net programs? I just want to hear from each one of you.

*Mr. Bridgeland. I will answer that, Mr. Lewis, and thank you for all you have done for this country for so many for so long.

One of the areas I work a lot, I am co-chair with Ethel Kennedy of the Earth Conservation Corps, here in the Anacostia. We work with young people from Congress Heights and Anacostia and other areas, literally in view of the Nation's Capitol, who sometimes wake up to the sound of gunfire.

*Mr. Lewis. It is a great program, thank you.

*Mr. Bridgeland. And just give you one example -- because I have walked in her shoes, now, for 10 years -- LaShante Moore was a teenage mother. She had three children, she was homeless, she was, literally, living on the streets of Washington, D.C., in view of the Capitol. The Earth Conservation Corps gave her a service year opportunity to come in and have a transformational experience that Crystal and I are going to have the opportunity to talk to you about tomorrow, Chairman Boustany, where she was able to not only see herself not as a problem to be solved, but a potential to be fulfilled.

And to help clean up the Anacostia River, this group of young people from Anacostia literally brought the nation's symbol, the bald eagle, back to the nation's capital. They fly over our Capitol today because of these young people. Imagine the hope that that gives them. I have seen her intersection with welfare, I have seen her intersection with food stamps, SNAP, I have seen her intersection with a whole host of programs. And so we walk in the shoes of these young people from Anacostia every day.

One issue I want to put on the -- a subject of this distinguished subcommittee is there are 1.2 million homeless youth in the United States in public schools today. And, under McKinney-Vento there is an obligation to help them with homeless liaisons. And that is a huge area that I view as a silent epidemic within the larger epidemic of high school dropout, and I think we need to walk in their shoes. Thank you.

*Mr. Lewis. Thank you.

*Mr. Whitehurst. Mr. Lewis, if it is a personal question, I don't think any of us have really walked in the shoes of somebody who is hungry. And I won't go there. I will say that I grew up relatively poor in a hard scrabble small community in the South, and everybody around me struggled. And I retain a strong sense of personal obligation to people who are having a tough time and need some assistance, and I think we need to do the best job we can to see that that assistance really helps them, rather than simply makes us feel good.

*Mr. Lewis. Appreciate it.

*Mr. Muhlhausen. Mr. Lewis, I used to -- in another lifetime, I used to work at a juvenile correctional facility in Baltimore, Maryland. And we would get young kids coming in who were detained for committing various crimes. And, with a little bit of structure in their life, many of these kids behaved very well. And we would just think to ourselves, why, you know, this kid here, he is -- with a little bit of guidance, seems like a perfectly great kid to be around.

But, as soon as he was released back into the community, he had no structure in his life, and he would end up getting re-arrested again for various crimes, usually selling drugs on the street, and come back. And it was just a rotating door, where, as much as we tried to help him in the correctional setting, there was nothing we could do when he

went back home and he had no structure in his life, somebody there, whether it was the parent, or some other person who could help give him guidance.

And so, while I haven't walked in the shoes of the poor, as -- in the question you say, I feel that, in many ways, and the case of my personal experience is that, you know, sometimes a supporting family is the best solution to all these problems.

*Mr. Lewis. Thank you.

*Ms. Entmacher. Thank you. I mean I have spent a lot of time listening, talking to poor mothers, trying to understand the struggles that they are encountering. Personally, I know that I never have.

I have lived on a very low stipend provided by a non-profit organization, and I tried to make it, you know, by eating a lot of peanut butter and day-old bread. Then I got sick. I went to a free clinic, and I got a prescription for an expensive antibiotic. When I went to fill it, I realized it was going to be, you know, a couple of weeks' pay, and I almost walked out, and then I realized, "You're crazy. Call your parents," you know? "You can afford it. You're sick. You need it." And the Bank of Mom and Dad, needless to say, came through. I got healthy, got -- you know, got better, went back to school. I have never been really poor.

My husband was hospitalized. While he was in the hospital, being treated for a condition that I later learned had a 50 percent mortality rate, I got a note from the insurance company, saying, "Oh," you know, "this doesn't qualify for coverage." And so, I thought we would have to cover that emergency -- you know, and at that point he had been in the hospital for five days. And that was very upsetting, of course. And -- but I realized, okay, you know, my parents, his parents, our savings, we will cover whatever it takes and I will -- you know, when I am stronger, I will fight with the insurance company to get it covered.

But for some people, you know, without health care coverage, that is -- you know, that is homelessness. That is hunger forever. That is a total disaster in their lives. So, you know, I have been fortunate. I haven't had to depend entirely on the safety net, which is why I feel really committed to try to make sure that those supports are available to other people.

*Mr. Lewis. Well, I want to thank each one of you for your response.

And, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this hearing, and being so liberal with the time.

*Chairman Boustany. I thank the gentleman. Let's go to Mr. Reed next.

*Mr. Reed. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will follow up on Mr. Lewis's question about personal experiences. And I think it is clear that we bring all of our life

experiences to this issue, in particular. And you know, being on the Republican side, sometimes I am accused of being part of the groups that are coming from the -- the people that are born with silver spoons in their mouth. And I can assure you, being the youngest of 12 whose father passed when I was 2, and I had a single mother raise 6 of us in the household that were left, that was not the case. But --

*Mr. Crowley. Tom, I think you had several spoons in your mouth, just --

[Laughter.]

*Mr. Reed. I used to. I am down 110 pounds. That is why Mr. Crowley is picking on me.

*Mr. Crowley. What a set-up I gave you.

*Mr. Reed. Thank you very much. And he is a good friend over there.

So, I am committed to this issue, too, because you are really talking about a core issue in America. And so, I am interested in hearing from you, our experts here today, from the point of view from the social worker on the front line. And, Mr. Muhlhausen, I believe, with your experience at the juvenile detention facility, other folks who have done research, you have talked with numerous people on the front line.

And what I am very interested from you -- and we will start with Mr. Muhlhausen, possibly -- is what do they feel is how they are judged, whether or not they are effective when they are dealing with the government bureaucracy out of Washington, D.C., or in the State of New York, where I am from, Albany, or our county seats in the relevant 11 counties I represent? How do they feel they are judged? What is the metric that they have to adhere to, presently? And is that the right metric we should be creating, in their mind set, on a front-line basis? Or is there something better we could do? Do you understand the question?

*Mr. Muhlhausen. Yes. Well, I -- my experience is the metric that was used was getting the day without having -- getting through the day without having a major incident, just making sure that nobody was hurt, that the facility was secure. And you are so focused on that, that you are not always able to take the long-term perspective of, "How can I actually change the lives of these troubled youth?"

And one of the things that profoundly impacted me was that we were told we were implementing a program called Therapeutic Communities at this correctional facility, and that it was proven to work in randomized experiments. And we were trained. We had about two days of training, and that is about it. And when I left the job and I came to Washington, D.C., I went up and I started to research the literature on Therapeutic Communities. And I found that we were in no way implementing the program that was in the literature. We were barely getting by with what we were implementing, and it was poorly implemented. And -- but we were able to tell the state legislators that we were

running an effective program, because it was based -- it was evidence-based, it was based on a program that was proven to work, even though we were poorly trained.

So, I think your answer is, you know, it is tough when you are on the day-to-day front line. The thing about the long-term -- when you are just trying to get through the day and make sure that everybody is safe, in the case when I was -- when I worked in juvenile corrections.

*Mr. Reed. So maybe Mr. Whitehurst will go there.

*Mr. Whitehurst. I don't know a lot about front-line social workers. I do know a fair amount about front-line teachers and child care workers. And I think one of the problems in that industry, if you think of it as an industry, or willing to think of it that way, is there aren't any measures of effectiveness. Whereas, we know that there are great pre-K teachers and terrible pre-K teachers, and family child care providers who do a great job and a terrible job, and they are all treated the same way.

And, you know, I would love to see a system where, you know, if somebody is working in the criminal justice system, there are metrics that indicate whether you are being successful or not. And if you do a great job, you can make a living wage, and if you are not doing a great job, you can go do something else.

*Mr. Reed. Well, before we go there, Mr. Chairman, that is something I would like to explore and go on record here.

You know, one of the things I think we forget in Washington, D.C. is we issue these edicts, or these standards from afar, from the ivory tower. I think we really need to reach out to the people on the front line and say, "Okay, how would you judge yourself to say if you are effective or not in impacting lives in a positive way," and then hold people accountable to their own metrics. I think that is the best way to go about this.

And in my last few minutes, Ms. Entmacher, I read your testimony with interest. And there is 80 programs that we are essentially talking about here today that have been summarized in the material. You talk a lot about what works. Identify to me one program that doesn't work, from your point of view.

*Ms. Entmacher. Well, I think, actually, Mr. Muhlhausen -- I looked at the testimony from an earlier hearing on a similar subject that this Subcommittee had. Marriage promotion -- I think it was Mr. Meehan who talked about, you know, single-parent families having --

*Mr. Reed. Because you talked a lot specifically about programs in your --

*Ms. Entmacher. Yes, yes, okay. Well, marriage --

*Mr. Reed. So the marriage promotion program?

*Ms. Entmacher. Marriage promotion programs.

*Mr. Reed. I am not familiar with them.

*Ms. Entmacher. Yes, there is --

*Mr. Reed. Oh, just those general programs. Is there an actual program that you could point to that would help me to show a program that doesn't work, from your point of view?

*Ms. Entmacher. Yes. There is money specifically -- well, allocated in TANF for states to run marriage promotion programs. There is specific funding for it. It was evaluated. And Mr. Muhlhausen testified about it in earlier testimony to this Subcommittee. And the results found that it did not increase marriage rates in any site, which was the program's primary goal. Of course, programs can have benefits beyond a primary goal, one of which could have been the relationship between couples, so that they could work together more effectively to parent.

But, as Mr. Muhlhausen found, in only one site, Oklahoma, were there any positive benefits in the couples' relationships. And, in several sites, there was actually harm done, and there was more conflict between the couples. So, you know, again, an interesting and worthy goal, but the evaluations indicated that it wasn't working.

*Mr. Reed. Thank you. And so, from what I heard from that testimony is that the marriage promotion programs are something we should not support and go forward with.

*Ms. Entmacher. Yes.

*Mr. Reed. Thank you. All right. With that, I yield back.

*Chairman Boustany. Thank the gentleman. Let's go to Mr. Crowley next.

*Mr. Crowley. Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this Committee hearing today. And, aside from my teasing of my colleague from New York, who I have fond affection for, Mr. Reed, I also would like to note for the record that the lack of green at the table before us -- the only thing green is the light indicating that I am able to speak right now. And I am -- just want to make that point, Mr. Chairman.

[Laughter.]

*Mr. Crowley. But I do find the focus of today's hearing very interesting, in that -- using evidence-based experience to formulate policy. I think that is interesting.

And, Mr. Muhlhausen, I am sure you -- maybe you will find this interesting, as well. Do you have any thoughts about whether there is currently sufficient evidence

about human actions significantly contributing to global warming? I don't expect you to answer that question.

But it seems to me that, with so much scientific evidence, overwhelming scientific evidence, like from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we should be pursuing government policies that reduce effects of global warming. Having said that, this hearing today -- and I do appreciate the chairman calling this hearing -- refers to funding that works. And I agree, we should fund programs that work.

So, I -- Ms. Entmacher, I appreciate the response you just gave to my colleague from New York, as well, in terms of what is or is not working.

The federal safety net programs lifted 39 million Americans out of poverty, cutting the number in poverty nearly in half. Programs like Social Security, nutrition assistance, and tax credits for working families, like the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, actually make a difference in people's lives. They are keeping people from falling deeper into a policy, and, to me, a policy that is working [sic].

So, we do need to fund what works, and that is fund the social safety net programs that help people, particularly low and middle-income families. EITC, the Child Tax Credit, are vital resources for millions of American families, many of whom are military families struggling to simply get by. Together, these two tax credits improve health, school performance, and provide a critical boost to a family that sets children on a path towards a much better way in life. Would you agree with that, Ms. Entmacher?

*Ms. Entmacher. Yes.

*Mr. Crowley. Thank you. I think that is why it is so important to keep supporting programs, and ensuring that they remain refundable for the low-income families that can benefit mostly from them.

We will be talking a lot over this week and the weeks to come about budgets. I suspect, as we speak, there is probably press conferences about a budget that is being proposed by my Republican colleagues, and others, as well. A budget is meant to reflect our policies, as a country. In this case, as a party, to some degree, as well, and the same in terms of our budget, what Democrats have proposed. The budgets that have been performed [sic] by my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle, I believe, have disproportionately cut programs that serve working families. I think that is a mistake.

And if we are focused on what works, we should be supporting, not weakening, these programs that do work to help lift Americans in their lives. If these programs keep children from going to bed hungry at night, I think we should continue them. If they provide child care and assistance, and enable parents to work and support the families, I think we should support that. If they help to keep the lights on, and the heat on, or over -- a roof and -- over a family's heads, I think we should support those types of programs. To me, those are programs that are working.

The research being done, and the focus on long-term outcomes, is important. And evidence-based policymaking is important. I agree. But let's not lose sight of the real goal, the goal of helping people, regardless of your political persuasion. And I did appreciate the answer that all of you gave, in terms of Mr. Lewis, in terms of walking in the shoes. I have been fortunate, as well, not to have walked in the shoes of people who are starving or hungry or without work or employment, nor my family. But I have tremendous empathy for folks who do -- are faced with those crises, and I think we, as a government, should do what we can to help lift them out of that, and that includes helping parents work.

One of the toughest things I think my constituents had -- have to make is when there is snow or no snow in New York State, and schools are closed, and parents are in a quandary as to what to do with their children, because they have no other means of child care but the school system. And it is painful for those individuals.

So, I thank all the panelists today. In particular, I want to thank the chairman for calling -- holding this hearing.

*Chairman Boustany. I thank the gentleman. That concludes all the questions.

I want to thank our panelists for their, really, tremendous testimony and answers to questions in this hearing, looking at expanding opportunity by funding what works. I think this created a great foundation for us to start with, to really look at how we are going to approach these programs.

I also want to note that there may be additional questions that Members have, which is customary. And they will submit these in writing, and we will provide your answers to be part of the record, as well. We would hope that you can get those answers back to us within a two-week period.

And, with that, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:41 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

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