

January 24, 2013

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Advisors of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy

FROM: Jon Baron

RE: Yesterday's NY Times: Evidence-based reform as an important,

overlooked path to deficit reduction

FYI – yesterday's New York Times has an excellent article by David Bornstein, linked here, that (i) describes the widespread view that the only two government options to address the budget deficit are to slash social programs or raise taxes, and (ii) cites evidence-based, costsaving program reforms as an important third approach that has been overlooked in the policy discussions. Drawing on work of the Coalition and others, the article provides concrete examples of program reforms in health care, crime prevention, and other areas found in rigorous randomized studies to produce important government savings while simultaneously improving people's lives.

We're particularly pleased that the article discusses our proposal for the government-wide use of "waivers" from federal law and regulation to stimulate state/local innovation and evidence-building aimed at increasing the number of proven, cost-saving reforms available to policymakers. Our proposal, <u>linked here</u> (2½ pages, plus references), is based on the highly-successful, bipartisan use of waivers in 1980s and 90s welfare reform to build credible evidence about what works, which had an important impact on national policy. We're seeking to advance this idea with Executive Branch and Congressional officials as part of the Obama Administration's second-term agenda.

We hope this is of interest, and welcome any comments or suggestions.

Please visit the Coalition's Help Desk, providing impartial expert advice and an open online workshop in evidence-

The Coalition is grateful to the MacArthur Foundation for its funding support for our work in this area.