

Board of Advisors

Robert Boruch
University of Pennsylvania

Jonathan Crane
Coalition for Evidence-Based
Policy

David Ellwood
Harvard University

Deborah Gorman-Smith
University of Chicago

Judith Gueron
MDRC

Ron Haskins
Brookings Institution

Blair Hull
Matlock Capital

Robert Hoyt
Jennison Associates

David Kessler
Former FDA Commissioner

Jerry Lee
Jerry Lee Foundation

Dan Levy
Harvard University

Jodi Nelson
Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation

Howard Rolston
Abt Associates

Isabel Sawhill
Brookings Institution

Martin Seligman
University of Pennsylvania

Robert Shea
Grant Thornton

Robert Solow
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

Nicholas Zill
Westat, Inc.

President

Jon Baron
jbaron@coalition4evidence.org
(202) 683-8049

1725 I Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20006
www.coalition4evidence.org

January 13, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Advisors of the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, and Other Interested Parties

FROM: Jon Baron

RE: Update – Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy

We're writing with a brief update on three items related to our work:

- Coalition Board member Ron Haskins had an excellent [New York Times op-ed on January 1 – “Social Programs That Work”](#) – in support of the federal evidence-based initiatives enacted in recent years.** Haskins - a Brookings Senior Fellow who was the lead House Republican staffer for the 1996 welfare overhaul and later advised President George W. Bush on welfare policy - articulates the principle that "the government should fund only social welfare programs that work" and underscores the importance of the recently-enacted evidence-based initiatives in which "the Obama administration, building on work by the Bush administration, has insisted that money ... go primarily to programs with rigorous evidence of success, as measured by scientifically designed evaluation."
- We're working with the new Republican-controlled Congress to solidify support for these initiatives, which incorporate key evidence-based concepts we've advanced with the Bush and Obama administrations, and to extend the concepts to new areas.** Although the recently-enacted omnibus spending bill for FY 2015 included modest reductions in funding for evidence-based initiatives at the Departments of Education and Labor, several Congressional evidence-based reform efforts that are bipartisan but originated with Republicans have also emerged in recent months. These include: (i) legislation introduced by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) to create a Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking (summarized [here](#)); (ii) Congress' enactment last year of a \$200 million evidence-based initiative in the Food Stamps program, to fund and rigorously evaluate state pilot programs aimed at increasing workforce participation of Food Stamps recipients (summarized [here](#) – see item 3); and (iii) the introduction of “Social Impact Bond” legislation by Reps. Todd Young (R-IN) and John Delaney (D-MD) in the House, and Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) in the Senate – designed to scale up evidence-based social interventions (summarized [here](#) – see item 2). We will keep you posted on developments in the new Congress.
- On January 21, we will hold an [optional webinar](#) for prospective applicants to the Coalition's [Low-Cost Randomized Controlled Trial \(RCT\) Competition](#).** The latest funding [announcement](#) for the competition, which is designed to select and fund low-cost RCTs aimed at building policy-important evidence about "what works" in social spending, was released in December. Three-page Letters of Interest will be accepted through February 13. The optional webinar will take place on Wednesday, January 21, from 2:00 - 3:00 ET, and will offer practical advice on preparing a

successful proposal. A key goal is to attract a diverse group of qualified applicants to the competition, including researchers of color. [Please register here](#).

We hope this update is helpful. Any thoughts or suggestions you have on our work would be much appreciated.

Jon

Jon Baron
President, Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy
1725 I Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington DC 20006
www.coalition4evidence.org
202-683-8049

The Coalition is grateful to the MacArthur Foundation, William T. Grant Foundation, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Overdeck Family Foundation for their funding support for our work. If you'd like to support our work, please consider making a tax-deductible [donation](#) to the Coalition.