WAYS AND MEANS
CHAIRMAN KEVIN BRADY

H.R. 5169 "What Works to Move Welfare Recipients into Jobs Act"
(Summary of Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute)
Promoting Proven Local Solutions that Help More People Get Back to Work
Sponsored by Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Buchanan (R-FL)

Under this bill:

- The Department of Health and Human Services (in coordination with the Department of Labor) would establish a "What Works Clearinghouse" to catalogue the different approaches helping welfare recipients move into work.
    - This clearinghouse, based on a similar one used by the Department of Education, would make it easier for states to know which approaches have been tested using independent, rigorous evaluations, and based on those results, an understanding of their effectiveness in achieving positive results for individuals and families.
    - The clearinghouse would also include a separate listing of approaches that are based on research but have not yet proven their effectiveness, expanding the awareness for future use and evaluation.
    - Finally, the clearinghouse would also document which approaches have been proven to be ineffective in achieving positive outcomes to prevent other states from repeating the same failed efforts.
- The overall measurement of poverty would improve by taking advantage of data already held by other federal agencies.
    - Current TANF funds provided to measure poverty would now specify that they be used to address underreporting of receipt of welfare benefits and improve data matching to better understand intergenerational poverty.
    - Using data already held by other federal agencies will improve program coordination and preserve research funds for analysis, rather than data collection.

Cost: No cost.

Support: There is broad conservative support for identifying programs that are effective in moving welfare recipients into jobs, and for using high-quality evaluation to determine what works. In addition, the President's FY2017 budget request for TANF calls for "peer learning to build the evidence base and disseminate information about effective practices."

Background:

- The goal of TANF is to help low-income families prepare for work, find jobs, and move up the economic ladder.
- Since welfare reform in 1996, states have used a variety of approaches to meet the goals of TANF and move welfare recipients into work, including assisting with job search, providing work supports like child care and transportation, assisting with education and training, and many others.
- While states have experimented with many approaches to helping welfare recipients find work, few have been studied using high-quality evaluations to determine whether they were effective in actually increasing recipient employment.
- When there are instance of proven successes, the results are not often shared widely limiting other states from being able to replicate them and move more recipients from welfare to work.