

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BRADLEY (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. COHEN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SPECTER, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. Res. 180. A resolution proclaiming October 15, 1995, through October 21, 1995, as the "Week Without Violence", and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BINGAMAN:

S. 1308. A bill to amend chapter 73 of title 31, United States Code, to provide for performance standards for block grant programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

THE BLOCK GRANT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS ACT

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I introduce the Block Grant Performance Standards Act of 1995. This legislation is intended to provide a minimum set of performance standards for all block grants allocating Federal funds to States, localities, and other recipients.

In the 104th Congress, we have seen a movement toward block grants. The idea behind this movement is that we have too many programs providing funding to other levels of government, and that these programs involve too much paperwork. This reasoning leads to the conclusion that if we bundle these programs into broader block grants, we will release other levels of government to better allocate these resources without wasting time and money filling out paperwork bound for bureaucrats in Washington.

Mr. President, I agree that in many cases some of this reasoning is correct. To the extent possible, we should try to reduce paperwork and increase flexibility for State and local governments receiving Federal funds. I believe, however, that in creating block grants we must be responsible to taxpayers and resist the temptation to simply turn over blank checks to other levels of government. As the elected officials at the Federal level, I believe that we must set up minimal performance standards for the block grants we provide.

I am pleased that some of the block grants we are creating do have accountability built in. The Chair of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Senator KASSEBAUM, for example, has done an admirable job of including planning and performance standards for the States' administration of the job training block grants anticipated by S. 143, now before the Senate. I was successful in attaching an amendment to the welfare reform bill approved by the Senate that will provide similar accountability.

The legislation I am introducing today is intended to provide account-

ability standards for all block grant programs. It requires entities receiving block grants to submit a plan to the agency administering the grant program that outlines the goals of the entity for the use of the Federal funds, a description of how the goals will be achieved, and a discussion of performance indicators that will be used to measure progress toward those goals. It also ensures public participation in the development of this plan through the creation of appropriate community advisory committees. Finally, it provides for the provision of penalties for entities receiving block grants who consistently do not meet the goals they set for themselves in their block grant plans over a period of 2 years.

Mr. President, I believe that this legislation strikes the right balance in ensuring that we meet our fiduciary responsibilities to Federal taxpayers and our desire to provide maximum flexibility to entities receiving block grants. It builds on the work of others, including Senator ROTH, the sponsor of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, Public Law 103-62, which set similar performance standards for the Federal Government; and David Osborne, who has written on the need to develop performance standards for government. It also draws on the work of Senator HATFIELD and his legislation to implement flexibility within current programs: S. 88, the Local Empowerment and Flexibility Act of 1995.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill and an article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1308

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Block Grant Performance Standards Act of 1995".

SEC. 2. ADMINISTRATION OF BLOCK GRANTS.

Chapter 73 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new subchapter:

"SUBCHAPTER II—CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO BLOCK GRANTS

"§ 7321. Purposes

"The purposes of this subchapter are to—

- "(1) enable more efficient use of Federal, State, and local resources;
- "(2) establish accountability for achieving the purposes of block grant programs; and
- "(3) establish effective partnerships to address critical issues of public interest.

"§ 7322. Definitions

"For purposes of this subchapter, the term—

- "(1) 'block grant program' means a program in which Federal funds are directly allocated to States, localities, or other recipients for use at the discretion of such States, localities, or recipients in meeting stated Federal purposes; and
- "(2) 'plan' means a block grant strategic plan described under section 7324.

"§ 7323. Requirement of approved block grant strategic plans

"No payment may be paid under any block grant program to any eligible entity unless

such entity has submitted and received approval for a plan.

"§ 7324. Block grant strategic plans

"The head of an agency administering a block grant program shall designate the criteria that shall be included in a block grant strategic plan. At a minimum, each plan shall contain—

"(1) a description of goals and objectives, including outcome related goals and objectives for each of the designated program activities for each of the first 6 fiscal years of the plan;

"(2) a description of how the goals and objectives are to be achieved, including a description of the operational processes, skills and technology, and the human, capital, information and other objectives required to meet the goals and objectives for the current fiscal year;

"(3) a description of performance indicators to be used in measuring or assessing the relevant output service levels and outcomes of each of the mandatory program activities; and

"(4) a description of the program evaluation to be used in comparing actual results with established goals and objectives, and the designation of results as highly successful or failing to meet the goals and objectives of the program.

"§ 7325. Review and approval of block grant strategic plans

"After receipt of a plan, the head of an agency shall—

"(1) no later than 90 days after the receipt of the application, approve or disapprove all or part of the plan;

"(2) no later than 15 days after the date of such approval or disapproval, notify the applicant in writing of the approval or disapproval; and

"(3) in the case of any disapproval of a plan, include a written justification of the reasons for disapproval in the written notice of disapproval.

"§ 7326. Community advisory committees

"(a) An entity applying for a block grant shall establish a community advisory committee in accordance with this section.

"(b) A community advisory committee shall advise an applicant in the development and implementation of a plan, including advice with respect to—

- "(1) conducting public hearings; and
- "(2) receiving comment and reviews from communities affected by the plan.

"(c) Membership of the community advisory committee shall include—

- "(1) persons with leadership experience in private business and voluntary organizations;
- "(2) elected officials representing jurisdictions included in the plan;
- "(3) representatives of participating qualified organizations;
- "(4) the general public; and
- "(5) individuals and representatives of community organizations who shall help to enhance the leadership role of the local government in developing a plan.

"(d) Before submitting an application for approval, or any reports required as a condition of receiving any payment under a block grant program, the applicant shall submit such application or report to the community advisory committee for review and comment. Any comments of the committee shall be submitted with the application or report to the head of an agency.

"§ 7327. Technical and other assistance

"The head of an agency administering a block grant program may provide technical assistance to applicants for block grants in developing information necessary for the design or implementation of a plan.