

Butler who lives next door immediately responded to cries for help. Ramon entered the burning home without regard to his own personal safety, located and rescued a one-year-old child and then reentered the home in an attempt to locate the baby's five-month-old sister. Unfortunately, the roof began to collapse and he could not proceed any further and exited the home.

At this point, City of Miami Gardens Police Officer Corey Jones arrived on the scene. Aware that the baby was still inside and told which room she was in, Officer Jones rushed back to the home, pulled hurricane shutters open, cranked the window open and leaped inside. Though the flames were intense and smoke filled the home, Officer Jones was successful in locating the infant and bringing her out to safety.

The Miami-Dade County Police Department recently presented its highest civilian honor, the Silver Medal of Valor, to Ramon Butler, and both he and Officer Jones have been acknowledged by Miami Gardens Mayor Shirley Gibson for their acts of bravery. It is with great pride that I too pay tribute to the efforts of these two community heroes and extend my congratulations to each of them for a job well done.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND RESULTS ACT

HON. TODD RUSSELL PLATTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. PLATTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce important legislation to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our Federal government—the Program Assessment and Results Act, or PAR Act, which establishes a statutory requirement that the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, working with agencies, review and assess the effectiveness of each federal program at least once every five years. As elected representatives of the people, we have a responsibility to use taxpayer dollars in the most effective way possible. As Congress formulates its budget each year, we must have the best information available to us on which to base our spending decisions.

The Government Performance and Results Act, or GPRA, has laid a solid foundation for agencies working with Congress to set strategic goals and begin to utilize performance based information. Building on GPRA, we must take the next step toward reforming the way the government conducts business.

One of the key aspects of any reform effort is to change the prevailing mindset. If our emphasis is on creating a more results-oriented government, then we must change our mindset from outputs to outcomes. It takes time to achieve this type of cultural shift. The reforms of the early 1990s—the CFO Act, GPRA and others—are just beginning to work as intended.

Prior efforts to make the federal government more effective—the Hoover Commission, Zero-Based Budgeting, the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System, Reinventing Government—have come and gone with little lasting effect. Federal managers have learned that if

they wait, each new administration is likely to attempt yet another broad based reform. From a management standpoint, it is difficult in that type of environment to make long-range plans; and it's next to impossible to achieve the kind of cultural shift needed to reform the management of the federal government.

By enacting GPRA, Congress put government reform in statute. Because of this statutory framework, federal managers now look at the requirements for performance plans and strategic plans required by GPRA and know they are here to stay regardless of changes in Congress and the Executive Branch. When the first agency strategic plans fell short of expectations, the reform effort was not scrapped—it was improved. Now, ten years after GPRA was enacted, we have strategic plans that are more in line with what was envisioned. We have seen slow, sustainable improvement.

GPRA requires that agencies focus attention on program evaluation as one of six aspects of their strategic plans. Unfortunately, according to a 2004 report from the Government Accountability Office, program evaluation is the one area where departments consistently come up short. Not only have agencies failed to comply with this requirement, the valuable information that stands to be gained from these evaluations is not culled, coordinated, or presented in a useful way.

We have seen great progress in meeting other objectives set out in GPRA. In 1997, only 76 percent of federal managers had developed performance measures. By 2003, that number had risen to 89 percent. It is now time to strengthen GPRA to address the shortfall we see in program evaluation.

By creating and using the Program Assessment Rating Tool, or PART, this Administration has gone a step beyond the strategic plans required by GPRA and implemented a system for evaluating the performance and results of federal programs. The next logical step is to codify the requirement for a coordinated evidence-based review of programs.

The PAR Act does not seek to codify the use of the PART specifically. Rather, this bill amends GPRA by establishing a requirement for program reviews. Specifically, the Office of Management and Budget, working with agency heads, would be required under the Act to review each program activity at least once every five years. By requiring OMB to coordinate this effort with the agencies we will take a great step forward in making the federal government more efficient and results oriented.

Information gleaned from these program reviews needs to be useful across the board to all stakeholders. Members of Congress, taxpayers, federal managers and the Executive Branch need to know if programs are being managed effectively and if they are achieving the desired result. Further, this legislation, once enacted, will allow us to compare data among different agencies, to see how different programs with similar goals are achieving results. Members of Congress can use the information to make informed budget decisions and conduct more effective oversight. It will help the taxpayers see what they are getting for their money. Most important, federal managers will use the information to improve the way they manage programs. The results will be a more effective and efficient government for the good of all Americans.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL TO DETERMINE ADDITIONAL ABUSES OF PRISONERS AND DETAINEES IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 4, 2005

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, it has been my privilege since the terrorist attacks of September 11th to visit our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Just a few days ago, I also traveled to Guantanamo Bay with my colleagues, U.S. Senator JON CORZINE and U.S. Representative ROBERT MENENDEZ, to investigate conditions at this key installation and visit with our soldiers on duty there, many of whom are members of the National Guard from our home state of New Jersey. Every visit I've made with our troops has added to the profound admiration and deep respect I have for the brave men and women who serve in our nation's armed forces and who are prosecuting this very difficult global war on terrorism.

At the same time, we do not honor the soldiers when we fail to investigate and call to account all of those up and down the chain of U.S. military command who are directly or indirectly responsible for abusing detainees under U.S. control. This grim reality is made all the clearer in an open letter delivered today to members of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee from a dozen top-ranking retired military officers in the U.S. armed services. They underscore that current U.S. detention and interrogation operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Guantanamo Bay, and elsewhere have undermined our intelligence gathering efforts, and added to the risks facing our troops serving around the world.

Last year, three reports that were compiled by U.S. Army officers and the bipartisan investigative commission appointed by U.S. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld documented in horrifying detail the egregious human rights abuses that occurred at Abu Ghraib Prison and other detention facilities under U.S. military control. Yet, the Congress failed to do our job, doggedly investigate how and why these abuses occurred, and put in place new safeguards for interrogations in U.S. military detention facilities and unfettered, independent investigations of prisoner treatment. As a result, more abuses have occurred.

In recent weeks, more credible disclosures of prisoner abuses at Guantanamo and other sites where detainees are being held have come to light because of reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the NYU Center for Human Rights and Global Justice and the Association of the American Bar of the City of New York. It is increasingly difficult for anybody to argue that the abusive behavior came from a few aberrant soldiers. Broader systemic problems need to be probed by this new Congress. Certainly, we all must concede that the on-going stream of new disclosures continues to hurt American standing in the global community of nations and the costs of these recurring, self-inflicted wounds and related risks to the safety of our soldiers continue to mount.

That is why I am today re-introducing legislation I first sponsored last July H.R. 4951 in the 108th Congress. It is designed to help prevent the kinds of abuses that occurred at Abu