

**Statement of
Congressman Pete Sessions**

**Before the
Subcommittee on Government Efficiency and Financial Management**

March 26, 2003

Thank you Mr. Chairman for giving me the opportunity to speak before this subcommittee. Last year I spoke before Chairman Horn's subcommittee and expressed my strong interest in the management reforms that President Bush is attempting to achieve, as exemplified by the "Management Scorecard." As chairman of the Results Caucus, I am pleased to congratulate President Bush on his efforts to afford accountability in the Budget.

While we have passed many reforms since the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993, we still have many management problems in our government to overcome. We must address these problems in a holistic way from both the executive and legislative branches. The presidential budget begins the process of tying together budget items to performance and accountability. The Administration is committing itself to achieving immediate, concrete, and measurable goals in the short-run. Since I spoke at Chairman Horn's hearing last year, much progress has been made, as evidenced by the scorecard.

By holding agencies accountable, we can prove that taxpayer money is being spent in a wise manner. We will no longer focus on how much funding has increased over last year's base level, but what that funding has accomplished. Departments and agencies are not solely responsible for problems that they encounter while serving the public. Sometimes Congress enacts laws that restrain agencies from managing in a more effective manner. But Congress also has opportunities to eliminate these restrictions.

Congressman Hal Rogers represents the positive role that Congress has played by demanding accountability for performance in his area of expertise. As chairman of the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee, Chairman Rogers cut the bonus pool for FY 2002 at the Federal Aviation Administration by half and bonus money at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration by one-seventh because the agencies failed to meet their target under GPRA.¹

Unfortunately Congress alone cannot hold agencies and departments accountable for their performance. The Administration understands this. In response they have created a simple "traffic light" grading system. Often found in well-run businesses, the grading system provides the agencies and departments with target areas from which to improve.

¹ "A Move to Tie Bonuses to Executives' Performance." Stephen Barr. *The Washington Post* January 27, 2002.

The management scorecard serves as a gauge of results and brings a corporate efficiency to the federal government.

The abundance of red lights in the initial release reveals the poorly managed agencies and departments that this Administration inherited. This system provides a map for management reform and I look forward to the day that green lights outnumber red. President Bush has set the agenda for reforming the Budget and government efficiency. Congress must share the responsibility.

While it is obvious that there are many improvements from the last scorecard, the current scorecard shows a glaring deficiency – all red in the category of competitive scoring. The private sector plays a crucial role in supporting our government's services. The private sector often possesses technology capabilities that our government cannot produce on its own. We must strive to bring the competitive sourcing area to green.

Agencies and departments should not be excused from meeting certain conditions due to the fact that they are a government entity. The federal government should be held to the same strict performance measures as private sector businesses in order to achieve the highest results for its customers – in this case, the American people.

Reform based presidential budget initiatives in the past often faded away due to a lack of oversight from Congress. The myriad of items consuming Congress' agenda should serve as no excuse to forget the accountability measures in future budgets. By setting high standards of demanding accountability from itself, the Administration will need full support from Congress. It is Congress' obligation to mirror President Bush's high standards and offer assistance to the President for reaching accountability.

Now more than ever, we need strong leadership from the Executive level to end years of unaccountable performance from agencies and departments. We know what needs to be done by viewing the red lights. We now have that strong leadership at the Executive level and a Congress in place to hold the Administration accountable for budgetary goals. I ask my colleagues to support President Bush's plan to promote accountability for performance in the budgetary process.