

113245

WMM

BY THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL

Report To The Congress

OF THE UNITED STATES

Progress In Improving Program And Budget Information For Congressional Use

The Comptroller General is required, by law, to develop standard terms and classifications for Federal fiscal, budgetary, and program-related information; to identify congressional needs for such information; and to monitor recurring reporting requirements of the Congress and recommend changes. This annual report, required by title VIII of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, lists GAO's work in these areas over the past year.



011964



113245

PAD-80-90
AUGUST 29, 1980



COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-200111

To the President of the Senate and the
Speaker of the House of Representatives

This report is submitted to the Congress in accordance with section 202(e) of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, as amended by title VIII of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. This section requires us to report annually on the progress and results of our continuing program, undertaken in accordance with the 1970 act, as amended, to improve the fiscal, budgetary, and program-related information reported to the Congress.

We have studied and reported on many aspects of the budget process during the past year. We have provided numerous reports to the Congress, testimony before congressional committees, and other assistance to members and staff of the Congress. These reports and actions are listed in the enclosures to this letter. Enclosure I lists the 43 budget-related reports we issued and Enclosure II lists the 13 occasions we testified since September 1, 1979.

These reports include analyses and recommendations for improving agencies' budget execution, including improvements in monitoring and controlling spending patterns to avoid wasteful year-end obligations and expenditures. The reports also address needed improvements in budget formulation and information in reports concerning zero-base budgeting; case studies of budget development in the Departments of Defense, Interior, and Health, Education, and Welfare; the feasibility of a "mission" budget structure for the Department of Agriculture; and the use of "full funding" practices for multi-year projects and activities.

Our reports and testimony also analyze various proposals for improving congressional oversight and executive branch accountability ("sunset" legislation, etc.). Other matters covered include needed improvements in the budget treatment of agency borrowings, ways to enhance congressional control over Federal credit activities and research and development programs, and the elimination of unneeded reporting by agencies to the Congress.

(990591)

For sale by:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Telephone (202) 783-3238

Members of Congress; heads of Federal, State,
and local government agencies; members of the press;
and libraries can obtain GAO documents from:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Document Handling and Information
Services Facility
P.O. Box 6015
Gaithersburg, Md. 20760

Telephone (202) 275-6241

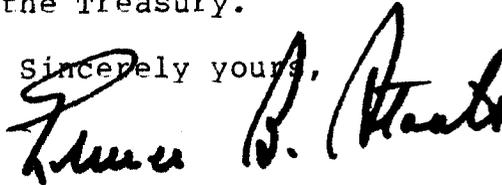
--timing and workload in the budget process, including the period of availability of authorizations and appropriations; and

--budget execution and management discipline covering problems such as wasteful year-end spending.

We hope to identify ways of resolving these issues and achieving the needed consistency and unity in budgetary concepts and practices envisioned under the 1970 legislation. The report on this work, which we plan to issue in early 1981, will identify the issues on which we believe action can be taken immediately by the Congress and/or executive branch, and those issues on which further analysis may be needed, perhaps by a special budget study group or commission. The report also will provide further information and detail pertaining to the work we did over the past few years to develop improvements in fiscal, budgetary, and program-related information for the Congress. In addition, the report will address the actions and plans of the executive branch to address the needs and issues we have identified.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, the Budget, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, and House Committee on Government Operations; the Director of the Congressional Budget Office; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and the Secretary of the Treasury.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosures

Moreover, we continued our cooperative work with agencies to provide program and budgetary information to several congressional authorizing committees for use in their March "views and estimates" reports to the Budget Committees. Assistance was provided to 21 committees requiring close work with over 80 agencies and commissions.

GAO NOW PREPARING A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT
ON CURRENT ISSUES IN THE BUDGET PROCESS

Ten years have elapsed since enactment of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. During that decade there has been a rapid growth in the variety and complexity of Federal programs--e.g., loan guarantees became an important form of Government assistance--as well as important institutional changes in budget processes. The enhanced role of the Congress in the budget process has been the most significant institutional change.

This period of rapid change has produced new budget issues not addressed by the President's 1967 Commission on Budget Concepts, and frequently divergent responses from the organizations involved in budget matters. We therefore felt a need to initiate a comprehensive study this year to summarize the major issues related to the budget process and budgetary information.

The study is addressing such subjects as:

- budget coverage, including the problem of "off-budget" activities;
- the categories and entities that should be the focus of congressional and executive branch budgetary actions--e.g., "national needs," "missions," programs, accounts, etc.;
- measurement and estimating problems, covering the need for more consistent recordings of budgetary amounts, the need for more realistic budget projections, and related issues;
- the adequacy of reporting on budget assumptions, global and national conditions and trends, and cross-cutting policy areas;
- budget controllability, including procedures to limit entitlements, and the usefulness of the existing "relatively controllable"/"relatively uncontrollable" framework;

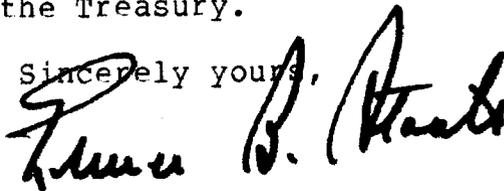
--timing and workload in the budget process, including the period of availability of authorizations and appropriations; and

--budget execution and management discipline covering problems such as wasteful year-end spending.

We hope to identify ways of resolving these issues and achieving the needed consistency and unity in budgetary concepts and practices envisioned under the 1970 legislation. The report on this work, which we plan to issue in early 1981, will identify the issues on which we believe action can be taken immediately by the Congress and/or executive branch, and those issues on which further analysis may be needed, perhaps by a special budget study group or commission. The report also will provide further information and detail pertaining to the work we did over the past few years to develop improvements in fiscal, budgetary, and program-related information for the Congress. In addition, the report will address the actions and plans of the executive branch to address the needs and issues we have identified.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations, the Budget, Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, and House Committee on Government Operations; the Director of the Congressional Budget Office; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and the Secretary of the Treasury.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosures



GAO BUDGET PROCESS RELATED
REPORTS SINCE
SEPTEMBER 1, 1979

<u>Date</u>	<u>Control#</u>	<u>Principal Recipient</u>	<u>Title or Subject</u>
September 7, 1979	FGMSD-79-58	Representative Al Ullman, Chair- man, House Commit- tee on Ways and Means	A New Approach to the Public Debt Legislation Should Be Considered
September 19, 1979	PAD-79-73	Senator Gaylord Nelson, Chairman, Senate Select Com- mittee on Small Business	Selected Federal Accounts: Past Outlays and GAO Recommendations
September 25, 1979	PAD-79-64	President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Repre- sentatives	Alternatives for Achieving Greater Equities in Fed- eral Land Payment Programs
September 25, 1979	PAD-79-45	President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Repre- sentatives	Streamlining Zero- base Budgeting Will Benefit Decision- making
November 16, 1979	PAD-80-8	Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies, Senate Committee on Appropriations	A Mission Budget Structure for the Department of Agri- culture: A Feasi- bility Study
November 21, 1979	PAD-80-5 (letter report)	Representative Jamie L. Whitten, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations	Effectiveness of the Federal Apportion- ment Process and Implications for Budget Execution
December 20, 1979	PAD-80-34	Representative Bennett Stewart	Spending Patterns of the Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government

<u>Date</u>	<u>Control#</u>	<u>Principal Recipient</u>	<u>Title or Subject</u>
December 31, 1979	PAD-80-19	Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, Chairman, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies, Senate Committee on Appropriations	Long-Term Cost Implications of Rural Electrification Administration Direct and Guaranteed Loan Programs
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-51 (letter report)	Robert Dawson, Administrator, House Committee on Public Works and Transportation	Program and Budgetary Information for Committees' Views and Estimates on President's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-52 (letter report)	Aubrey Sarvis, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation	Program and Budgetary Information for Committees' Views and Estimates on President's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-53 (letter report)	Charles Conklin, Director, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs	Program and Budgetary Information for Committees' Views and Estimates on President's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-54 (letter report)	John M. Martin, Chief Counsel, House Committee on Ways and Means	Program and Budgetary Information for Committees' Views and Estimates on President's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-55 (letter report)	Stephen Paradise, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Human Resources	Program and Budgetary Information for Committees' Views and Estimates on President's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-56 (letter report)	Kenneth J. Painter, Acting Staff Director, House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce	Program and Budgetary Information for Committees' Views and Estimates on President's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981

<u>Date</u>	<u>Control#</u>	<u>Principal Recipient</u>	<u>Title or Subject</u>
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-57 (letter report)	Carl Perian, Chief of Staff, House Committee on Mer- chant Marine and Fisheries	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-58 (letter report)	Kenneth McLean, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-59 (letter report)	William Bader, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-60 (letter report)	Joseph Nellis, General Counsel, House Committee on the Judiciary	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-61 (letter report)	Harry A. Gould, Executive Director, House Committee on Science and Technology	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-62 (letter report)	Michael Stern, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Finance	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-63 (letter report)	John Yago, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981

<u>Date</u>	<u>Control#</u>	<u>Principal Recipient</u>	<u>Title or Subject</u>
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-64 (letter report)	William Cherkasky, Staff Director, Senate Select Com- mittee on Small Business	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-65 (letter report)	Fowler C. West, Staff Director, House Committee on Agriculture	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-66 (letter report)	Paul Nelson, Staff Director, House Committee on Bank- ing, Finance and Urban Affairs	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-67 (letter report)	John J. Brady, Chief of Staff, House Committee on Foreign Affairs	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-68 (letter report)	Thomas G. Powers, General Counsel, House Committee on Small Business	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-69 (letter report)	Henry J. Casso, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-70 (letter report)	Jonathan Steinberg, Chief Counsel, Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981

<u>Date</u>	<u>Control#</u>	<u>Principal Recipient</u>	<u>Title or Subject</u>
February 11, 1980	PAD-80-71 (letter report)	Warren W. Kane, Professional Staff Member, Senate Com- mittee on Appropri- ations	Program and Budgetary Information for Com- mittees' Views and Estimates on Presi- dent's Budget for Fiscal Year 1981
February 12, 1980	PAD-80-16	Representative Norman Y. Mineta, Chairman, Budget Process Task Force, House Committee on the Budget	Should Full Funding Be Applied to the Rental Assistance and Family Planning Programs?
February 29, 1980	PAD-80-31	Representative Jack Brooks, Chair- man, House Commit- tee on Government Operations	Budget Formulation: Many Approaches Work But Some Im- provements Are Needed
March 28, 1980	PAD-80-45	President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Repre- sentatives (Statu- tory Requirement)	Alternative For Eliminating Am- trak's Debt to the Government
April 9, 1980	PAD-80-32 (letter report)	Representative Robert N. Giaimo, Chairman, House Committee on the Budget	Legislative Change Needed to Improve Budget Treatment of Certificates of Beneficial Owner- ship
April 18, 1980	PAD-80-72 (letter report)	Senator William V. Roth, Ranking Mi- nority Member, Sub- committee on Inter- governmental Rela- tions, Senate Commit- tee on Governmental Affairs	Analysis of Re- quirements for Recurring Reports to the Congress
April 30, 1980	PSAD-80-41 (letter report)	Representative Herb Harris, Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service	Unsupported Year- end Obligations Overstate the Pro- gress of Assisted Housing

<u>Date</u>	<u>Control#</u>	<u>Principal Recipient</u>	<u>Title or Subject</u>
May 22, 1980	PAD-80-77 (letter report)	Senator Abraham Ribicoff, Chair- man, Senate Com- mittee on Govern- mental Affairs	Observations on Oversight Reform Proposals
June 16, 1980	PAD-80-39	Senators Ernest Hollings and Henry Bellman, Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, Senate Com- mittee on the Budget	Federal Disaster Assistance: What Should the Policy Be?
June 23, 1980	LCD-80-68	President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Repre- sentatives	Program to Improve Federal Records Management Practices Should Be Funded By Direct Appropriations
July 2, 1980	PAD-80-29	President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Repre- sentatives	Spending Authority Recordings in Cer- tain Revolving Funds Impair Con- gressional Budget Control
July 7, 1980	PSAD-80-60 (letter report)	Senator Howard Baker	Year-end Spending by Federal Agencies
July 23, 1980	FGMSD-80-66 (letter report)	Representative Robert J. Lagomarsino	Article Alleging \$1 Trillion Missing From Treasury An- nual Report to the Congress Without Adequate Support
July 28, 1980	PSAD-80-67	Representative Herbert E. Har- ris II, Chairman, Subcommittee on Human Resources, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service	Government Agencies Need Effective Planning to Curb Unnecessary Year- End Spending
August 6, 1980	FGMSD-80-84	Representative Cardiss R. Collins, Chairwoman, Sub- committee on Man- power and Housing, House Committee on Government Opera- tions	Are Written Guide- lines Needed to Establish New Agencies' Funding Needs?

GAO BUDGET PROCESS RELATED
TESTIMONY SINCE
SEPTEMBER 1, 1979

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name/Title</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Title or Subject</u>
Septemoer 11, 1979	Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General of the United States	House Commit- tee on Ways and Means	The General Account- ing Office's Report: A New Approach to the Public Debt Legislation Should Be Considered
September 13, 1979	Harry S. Havens, Director, Program Analysis Division	Senate Commit- tee on Govern- mental Affairs	S. 1304, The Legis- lative Oversight Act of 1979
November 15, 1979	Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General of the United States	Subcommittee on Rules of the House, House Com- mittee on Rules	Assuring Program Accountability
November 29, 1979	Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General of the United States	House Committee on Rules	H.R. 5858, The Sunset Review Act of 1979
December 11, 1979	Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General of the United States	Budget Process Task Force, House Committee on the Budget	The Federal Budget Process
March 10, 1980	Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General of the United States	House Committee on the Budget	Opportunities to Achieve Savings Through Legislative Action
March 25, 1980	Harry S. Havens, Director, Program Analysis Division	Subcommittee on Legislation and National Secur- ity, House Com- mittee on Govern- ment Operations	Control of Year- end Spending
May 1, 1980	Harry S. Havens, Assistant Comptroller General for Program Evaluation	Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Man- agement, Senate Committee on Gov- ernmental Affairs	Control of Year- end Spending

Date	Name/Title	Committee	Title or Subject
May 8, 1980	Jerome H. Stolarow, Director, Procurement and Systems Acquisition Division	Subcommittee on Human Resources, House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service	HUD's Unsupported Year-End Obligations Overstated the Pro- gress of Assisted Housing
June 4, 1980	Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General of the United States	House Committee on Science and Technology	H.R. 7178, The Research and Development Author- ization Estimates Act (Multi-Year Funding of R&D)
June 23, 1980	Harry S. Havens, Assistant Comptroller General for Program Evaluation	Special Subcom- mittee on Con- trol of Federal Credit, Senate Committee on the Budget	Control of Loan Guarantees
July 24, 1980	Morton A. Myers Director, Program Analysis Division	Subcommittee on Legislation and National Secur- ity, House Com- mittee on Govern- ment Operations	H.R. 6686, The Con- gressional Reports Elimination Act of 1980
August 19, 1980	Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General of the United States	Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs	S. 2880, The Con- sultant Reform Act of 1980



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

**UNITED STATES
GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548**

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300**

**POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U. S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE**



THIRD CLASS