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**National Academy of Public Administration Issues Report for CRS,
Evaluating Science and Technology Policy Resources for U.S. Congress
*Report Recommends Enhancing Existing Entities and Creating Advisory Office***

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy) today released its Panel [report](#) for the Congressional Research Service (CRS) that evaluates the current Legislative branch resources available to Congress that focus and advise on science and technology developments and policy.

“Members and staff of the U.S. Congress need access to the best scientific and technological expertise as they make policy, conduct oversight, and interact with constituents,” said Terry Gerton, President and CEO of the Academy. “In addition, they need to understand how developments in science and technology create social changes that require a public policy response. The Panel’s expert evaluation and recommendations should help to guide efforts to enhance the quality and availability of science and technology support available to Congress.”

As directed by Congress in FY2019 appropriations legislation, the Academy Panel detailed the current science and technology policy resources available to Congress within the Legislative branch, including the CRS and the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO); assessed the potential need for the creation of a separate entity to advise Congress on science and technology policy, such as the former Office of Technology Assessment; and determined whether a separate science and technology entity would duplicate services provided by existing entities.

The Panel considered three options for addressing gaps between Congressional needs and existing services. The first option was to enhance the capabilities of existing Legislative branch support agencies; the second option was to create a new, separate agency to fill existing gaps with attention given to avoiding duplication of effort; the third option was to enhance the capabilities of existing Legislative branch support agencies as well as create a science and technology advisory office within Congress.

The Panel ultimately recommended that Congress pursue the third option – funding the enhancement of existing Legislative branch support agencies such as CRS and GAO and

building the capacity of those agencies to meet the Congressional needs. In addition, the Panel recommends that Congress establish an Office of Congressional Science and Technology Advisor, which will serve all of Congress to help with absorptive capacity for science and technology resource support from CRS and GAO. The Advisor would also chair a Coordinating Council to help avoid duplication of efforts by CRS and GAO.

The Panel's recommended option has four key components:

1. CRS enhances and expands its quick turnaround and consultative services in S&T-related policy issues.
2. GAO further develops the capability of its Science, Technology Assessment, and Analytics (STAA) mission team to meet some of the supply gaps identified in the report and makes appropriate changes in its organization and operating policies to accommodate the distinctive features of technology assessments and other foresight products.
3. Congress creates an Office of the Congressional Science and Technology Advisor (OCSTA), which would focus on efforts to build the absorptive capacity of Congress, to include supporting the recruitment and hiring of advisors for House and Senate committees with major science and technology oversight responsibilities. OCSTA would also be responsible for horizon scanning for science and technology trends.
4. Congress creates a Coordinating Council to be led by the Advisor and includes representatives from CRS, GAO's STAA, and a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) ex officio member, with the objective to limit duplication and coordinate available resources to most benefit Congress.

In addition, the Panel recommends that Congress conduct a thorough independent, nonpartisan, review to evaluate the performance of this option, which would take place 24 months after implementation. To read the Panel's full report, visit [here](#).

About the National Academy of Public Administration

Chartered by Congress to provide non-partisan expert advice, the Academy is an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan organization established in 1967 to assist government leaders in building more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent organizations. Learn more at www.napawash.org

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