

GAO

Testimony

Before the Committee on Rules and Administration
U.S. Senate

For Release on Delivery
Expected at
9:30 a.m. EDT
Wednesday
July 29, 1998

GOVERNMENT PRINTING

GPO Faces Management
Challenges

Statement for the Record of
L. Nye Stevens
Director, Federal Management
and Workforce Issues
General Government Division



Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to participate in your hearing on S. 2288, The Wendell H. Ford Government Publications Act of 1998. As agreed with the Committee, we will not comment on the provisions of the bill today, but will use the prospect of a major redefinition of printing and publication responsibilities as a backdrop for discussion of the management audit of the Government Printing Office that was recently delivered to you and other congressional stakeholders. This report was mandated by the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for 1998. The conference report accompanying the act directed us to make extensive use of outside consultants in conducting the audit. We contracted with Booz-Allen & Hamilton for conduct of the audit in December of last year, on a competitive basis.

We worked closely with Booz-Allen during the 5 months it took to conduct the audit and prepare the report. To assure a sound approach to the study, we reviewed the contractor's workplans, regularly discussed the progress of agreed-upon tasks and development of findings, reviewed evidentiary support, and participated with Booz-Allen in several briefings for GPO management and congressional sponsors of the work. The final report, delivered to us by Booz-Allen on May 21, makes some 90 recommendations organized under the topics of marketing, sales and distribution, procurement services, human resources, financial management, and information technology. The Public Printer's comments are included in the final report.

I am accompanied by Joyce Doria, the Booz-Allen partner for the study, and Jack Mayer, who managed the project for Booz-Allen. I will leave it to them to summarize the study's findings and recommendations. I would like to make a single broad point that relates these findings to the bill you have before you today. That point is that the bill as presently written does not take into account the need to fix GPO's management deficiencies.

S.2288 would establish the Government Publications Office as an independent entity with substantially more authority, and autonomy, than the Government Printing Office enjoys today. The Joint Committee on Printing, which today closely oversees the work of GPO, would be eliminated. In its discussions with GPO's customers, Booz-Allen found little support for eliminating GPO and thereby forcing the branches and agencies of government to develop their own means of publishing and distributing the information they produce. The dissemination of

government information is an important governmental function, and Booz-Allen found no evidence that people believe otherwise. However, this finding was closely linked with the strong desire on the part of GPO's customers to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. The Booz-Allen study confirmed that there were many ways in which GPO's management could be improved to better focus on and meet the needs of its customers in Congress, the executive branch, and the user community. Its recommendations, beginning with the need for a future-oriented and proactive strategic plan to guide the institution's direction and focus accountability, provide a guidepost for the management and operational improvements that are needed.

S.2288, in its present form, would not require the newly-constituted Government Publications Office to make these needed management improvements. In fact, as an organization with freedom to depart from the standard governmentwide human resource management, procurement, and budget oversight requirements, the reconstituted GPO would be outside the accountability framework that shapes oversight of most executive branch entities. We realize that one of the purposes of the proposed reorganization is to provide GPO the independence and autonomy that would enable it to serve all three branches of government. Nevertheless, the need would remain for some form of systematic accountability for efficiency and performance. We believe that making the agency subject to some specially-tailored provisions of the Government Performance and Results Act, just as the Postal Service is, would impose strategic planning and performance reporting requirements that could only be therapeutic. Similarly, although the bill does provide for the preparation and audit of annual financial statements, adding GPO to the list of agencies subject to the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 would expand the agency's financial management obligations and help deter fraud, waste, and abuse of government resources. Finally, explicitly relating any new GPO information responsibilities to those of executive agencies under such statutes as the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Federal Records Act, and the Freedom of Information Act, would help clarify GPO's intended role.

In short, Mr. Chairman, based on the management audit Booz-Allen conducted in collaboration with us, we believe that GPO has significant and persistent management problems, beginning with the lack of a clearly-defined strategic mission and plan for achieving it. These issues are relevant to congressional consideration of the terms under which GPO is to be granted a greater degree of independence and autonomy than its

present relationship to the Joint Committee on Printing affords. My colleagues from Booz-Allen will present their findings in some more detail, and then we will be pleased to respond to whatever questions you or the other members of the Committee may have.

Ordering Information

The first copy of each GAO report and testimony is free. Additional copies are \$2 each. Orders should be sent to the following address, accompanied by a check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents, when necessary. VISA and MasterCard credit cards are accepted, also. Orders for 100 or more copies to be mailed to a single address are discounted 25 percent.

Orders by mail:

**U.S. General Accounting Office
P.O. Box 37050
Washington, DC 20013**

or visit:

**Room 1100
700 4th St. NW (corner of 4th and G Sts. NW)
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, DC**

**Orders may also be placed by calling (202) 512-6000
or by using fax number (202) 512-6061, or TDD (202) 512-2537.**

Each day, GAO issues a list of newly available reports and testimony. To receive facsimile copies of the daily list or any list from the past 30 days, please call (202) 512-6000 using a touchtone phone. A recorded menu will provide information on how to obtain these lists.

For information on how to access GAO reports on the INTERNET, send an e-mail message with "info" in the body to:

info@www.gao.gov

or visit GAO's World Wide Web Home Page at:

<http://www.gao.gov>

**United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548-0001**

**Bulk Rate
Postage & Fees Paid
GAO
Permit No. G100**

**Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300**

Address Correction Requested
