Speaker Ryan: Floor remarks on evidence-based policymaking bill

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WASHINGTON—Today, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) spoke on the House floor in support of Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act, legislation the speaker introduced earlier this month. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

"My colleagues: today I rise in strong support of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act.

"First, I want to thank the sponsors of this bill: Mr. Farenthold, Mr. Kilmer, and Chairman Gowdy. Blake Farenthold and Derek Kilmer were key drivers of this measure and made it stronger by incorporating the OPEN Government Data Act. And Trey Gowdy and his staff—especially Katy Rother—spent countless hours working with my team, especially Ted McCann, and others to turn the Commission on Evidence-Based Policy's vision into legislation. All the members of the commission did incredible work.

"I want to especially thank Senator Patty Murray for her willingness to work together on this issue. We may be on different sides of the aisle, but there's one thing we passionately agree on: what government does, it should do well. The taxpayer's money should always be protected, and that is exactly why we came together to write this bipartisan legislation.

"So, what does this bill do? It protects privacy. It improves transparency. It ensures that federal agencies are protecting the data collected by the government. The

American people deserve to know—and to understand—exactly what data the government is collecting. And they deserve to know that the strictest safeguards are placed on that data.

"The driving purpose of this legislation is simple: we are requiring federal agencies to prioritize evidence when measuring a program's success.

"So here is what we're talking about. Take poverty. Instead of measuring success based on inputs, on how much money we spend, let's measure success by outputs, by outcomes. Is it working? Are people getting out of poverty?

"By directing agencies to do this, no longer will 'we don't know' be an acceptable to answer when asked if a program is working.

"With this bill, we are asking the federal bureaucracy to step up its game. We are asking ourselves how we can improve the lives of our fellow citizens by better understanding the programs that we put in place. This is just good common sense policy, but it is going to mean a real sea change in how we solve problems.

"With that, I urge passage of this bill."