



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

## MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors  
Re: Report on Trade Adjustment Assistance  
Da: Thursday, May 25, 2006

Today the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released its recently completed report on performance data collected in conjunction with the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, with jurisdiction over international trade, and a requestor of the report, made the following comment:

“I welcome this report and appreciate the work of the Government Accountability Office on this issue. GAO’s examination of Trade Adjustment Assistance performance data provides some useful insights. For example, the proactive effort of the Department of Labor to improve data quality by requiring states to validate samples of the data they report appears to be having a positive effect. Current law does not include a mechanism to hold states accountable for the quality of the TAA data they report. That makes it more difficult for Labor to police. This is something we should revisit when it’s time to reauthorize the TAA program.

“The report also shows how the performance data may be lagged. That doesn’t mean the data aren’t useful in gauging program performance over time. It just means that the data may be less helpful as a snapshot of current performance. Separately, Labor is moving to change data reporting requirements to implement a common set of measures for federally funded job training programs that share similar goals. That’s going to take some time to fully implement. Not all states are going to proceed with implementation at the same pace.

“GAO identified other areas where the performance data are incomplete. So there’s room for further improvement. GAO included some helpful recommendations to that end. For example, the suggestion to share best practices among the states makes a lot of sense. Naturally there are going to be resource constraints that limit the speed with which different states make progress. Some states may have better information technology systems in place than others. Still, I believe this study will help Labor in its ongoing efforts to improve the quality of TAA performance data collected nationwide. I’ll continue to monitor Labor’s progress in those efforts as part of my oversight to make sure the TAA program is meeting its goals.”