

Politics

O'Malley's 'Governing by the Numbers' seen as national model

Len Lazarick, The Examiner
Apr 24, 2007

Annapolis - Gov. Martin O'Malley has been barely been in office three months, but the performance-based governance model he just instituted, StateStat — a version of CitiStat, which he implemented seven years ago as Baltimore City mayor — is now being promoted on the national level.

Data-driven policymaking is “exactly the medicine we need at this time,” said John Podesta, president of a Washington think tank, the Center for American Progress, and former chief of staff to President Bill Clinton.

Podesta invited O'Malley to keynote a seminar Monday on “Governing by the Numbers,” the title of a new report highlighting O'Malley's use of biweekly CitiStat meetings to improve services, along with a similar program in Washington state.

“They were managing by feel and not by fact” when he became mayor, O'Malley told an audience of Washington policy wonks in a speech similar to one he gave his own new Cabinet about StateStat in February.

Reece Rushing, co-author of the new reports on

CitiStat, said the center was anxious to see how data-driven policy could be implemented at the state and federal level.

“If it can be done on the city level, it can probably be done on the state level,” Rushing said, but “there are much bigger challenges on the state level,” including the problems of size and distance. He and the Center for American Progress are interested to see if “[O'Malley and staff] can overcome those challenges.”

The CitiStat program, modeled after a New York City program to reduce crime, has now been implemented in 10 U.S. cities, including Atlanta, San Francisco and St. Louis, but only Washington state has tried to do it on the state level.

Larisa Benson, director of government management accountability and performance for Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire, said her state implemented the program 18 months ago, after visiting Baltimore and talking to O'Malley's staff.

Benson said there is “the complication of distance” in Washington, a state much larger than Maryland, but “it can be overcome.”

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