Accounting 101

A government org says Bush’s AIDS policies don’t add up

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In April, the Government Accountability Office (GAO)—a congressional agency that evaluates the effectiveness of federal policies—held the Bush administration, well, accountable for AIDS miscalculations. On April 4, GAO investigated a Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) policy that funnels one-third of U.S. international HIV prevention funds to abstinence-only programs. AIDS workers on the ground told GAO that the restrictions sap prevention efforts among most target populations, which are sexually active. GAO asked Congress to reassess endorsing “strong abstinence programs.” On April 26, GAO looked homeward to state AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs), determining that variations in eligibility requirements cause people to lose ADAP coverage when they move states. Also, drug companies regularly overcharge the already cash-strapped programs, instead of giving the government-mandated discount. The GAO recommends, but policymakers will now decide if accountability will indeed mean change.

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