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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS CONTRACT TO  
MEASURE SATISFACTION WITH ITS SERVICES**

***30 High Impact Programs to be Included in American Customer Satisfaction Index***

MILWAUKEE, June 7, 1999 - The 30 federal agencies that serve 90% of government's customers will be included in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The launch was announced by Vice President Gore through the National Partnership for Reinventing Government.

ACSI is a national economic indicator of the quality of goods and services in the U.S. marketplace. It provides customer satisfaction scores for 34 industries and 200 companies with aggregates to economic sectors and to the nation as a whole. Student loans and social security are among the 30 government services that will now be added to the ACSI. Established in 1994, the ACSI methodology links customer satisfaction to economic returns for companies and to improved performance for the public sector. ACSI is produced through a partnership between the University of Michigan Business School, the American Society for Quality, and Arthur Andersen.

Programs of the following government agencies and departments will be included in the ACSI: Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Environmental Protection, General Services Administration, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, NASA, Office of Personnel Management, Social Security, State, Transportation, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs.

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"Government service is a large part of the economy. It is important the quality of that service is measured in a uniform manner so that comparisons can be made to the private sector," said Claes Fornell, the Donald C. Cook Professor at the University of Michigan. The ACSI methodology was developed under the direction of Fornell. "The public sector is under great pressure to become more efficient. But efficiency is not always the same as good service. The government has now taken a step to make sure that the quality of service does not get shortchanged."

"Including these government agencies in the American Customer Satisfaction Index gives all of us a voice and also provides the agencies with a roadmap for doing the best job possible," Jack West of the American Society for Quality said. "ACSI scores customer satisfaction on a scale that allows comparisons among agencies and with private businesses."

Research and statistical analysis will be done at the University of Michigan Business School's National Quality Research Center under the direction of Fornell and Barbara Everitt Bryant, former director of the Census Bureau. ASQ will provide expertise and logistical support and Arthur Andersen will assist with advising agencies on how to improve their customer satisfaction.

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