



REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

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REPUBLICAN SPENDING REDUCTION PROPOSAL CREATE A SUNSET COMMISSION

PURPOSE

- This proposal would create a commission to systematically review Federal programs and make recommendations to Congress about those that should be terminated.
- The commission would question the need for each Federal agency, look for potential duplication of programs, and consider new and innovative changes to improve each agency's operations.

SUMMARY

- The Federal Sunset Act creates a bipartisan Sunset Commission, which will set an expiration date on each Federal agency.
- The 12-member commission would be an independent body charged with reviewing the policies and programs of agencies of the Federal Government at least once every 12 years. It would seek public input through hearings on every agency under review and recommend actions on each agency or program to Congress.
- When an agency reached its expiration date, it would be required to prove its present day value to taxpayers and Congress or face elimination.
- After its review, the Sunset Commission would submit a report to Congress containing an analysis of each agency, and give recommendations as to which agencies should be abolished, reorganized, or substantively changed.
- Congress would then draft legislation to carry out the recommendations.

BACKGROUND

- Representative Brady has introduced the Federal Sunset Act of 2009 (H.R. 393), which would create a Federal Agency Sunset Commission to identify and eliminate waste, duplication, and inefficiency in government agencies.
- In addition, the Republican Study Committee has created a "Sunset Caucus" to champion the elimination of wasteful, duplicative, or unnecessary programs, and to introduce legislation or amendments to terminate them.
<http://rsc.tomprice.house.gov/Solutions/SunsetCaucus.htm>
- The Federal Government is the world's largest and most complex entity, with about \$3.6 trillion in outlays funding a broad array of programs and operations.

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- Many programs, falling in 31 policy areas, have been designated as “high risk” by the Government Accountability Office due to their vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.
 - Many programs have had their authorizations expire – programs originally created by 250 laws – and yet receive funding, almost \$291 billion for fiscal year 2010. Congress has not reviewed and updated these laws, in some cases for many years. For example, certain Environmental Protection Agency programs have not been reauthorized since 1983.
 - A Sunset Commission would provide a systematic means of identifying obsolete or ineffective programs or agencies, exposing them to public scrutiny, and requiring that they demonstrate why they should be continued.
 - Solutions to these problems offer the potential to save billions of dollars and improve service to the public.

This document was prepared by the Republican staff of the Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives. It has not been approved by the full committee and may not reflect the views of individual committee members.