



April 15, 2024

Honorable Jodey Arrington, Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Brendan F. Boyle, Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Arrington and Ranking Member Boyle:

I am writing to support passage of H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act. I served as director of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) from 2003 through 2005. In my opinion, H.R. 7032 would improve CBO's access, and especially the timeliness of access, to executive agencies' data essential to fulfilling its mission.

At present, CBO receives data under the authority provided by the Congressional Budget Act. These are largely cooperative arrangements, at times augmented by formal data-sharing agreements. While this process has generally worked well, it would be useful to clarify and strengthen CBO's access to agencies' data.

As noted in CBO's [letter](#) to you:

H.R. 7032 would amend section 201(d) of the Congressional Budget Act, which governs CBO's access to executive branch data, by striking a parenthetical statement in that section, "(other than material the disclosure of which would be a violation of law)." That condition is unnecessary when another statute more specifically governs CBO's access to certain data. It also can hamper access to data by requiring CBO to enter into additional discussions with agencies, thus impairing the timeliness of CBO's work.

Enacting the bill would remove the caveat and, instead, provide CBO access to executive branch data unless that access is specifically disallowed by a future law. H.R. 7032 also includes a reference to section 203(e) of the Congressional Budget Act to highlight CBO's obligation to protect the restricted information it receives.

This relatively modest clarification of CBO's authority to request and receive data will strengthen CBO's ability to provide Congress with timely cost estimates, more detailed reports, and other information supporting Congress' deliberations.

I congratulate you on the successful vote in the Budget Committee and hope to see H.R. 7032 enacted into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Holtz-Eakin". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Douglas Holtz-Eakin, President