



U.S. House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
Washington, DC 20515-6065

May 9, 2024

The Honorable Phillip Swagel
Director, Congressional Budget Office
Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Director Swagel:

On May 8, 2024, the House Committee on the Budget held a hearing entitled, *The Cost of the Border Crisis*. During the hearing, Republican Members talked about the fiscal consequences of mass illegal migration at the federal, state, and local levels. In addition, there was significant discussion about how the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) does not conduct a full analysis of the budgetary effects of the border crisis. Members pointed out that CBO's baseline included economic and revenue contributions from mass illegal migration, but failed to include *the cost* of mass illegal migration; specifically, the cost to our entitlement system.

Per CBO's February 2024 baseline, "estimates and projections of net immigration by some groups — such as people who enter the country illegally — are particularly uncertain."¹ However, "CBO projects that a surge in the rate of net immigration that began in 2022 will continue through 2026" and will "expand the labor force and increase economic output."² CBO is assuming significant economic and revenue contributions from illegal migration, but does not include direct spending, because the cost associated with this group is "uncertain."

Mass illegal migration into the United States does not come with a zero-dollar price tag. CBO failing to conduct a comprehensive analysis of tens of millions of illegal migrants being allowed to reside in the country by this Administration amounts to a serious deficiency — particularly when they are receiving federal taxpayer dollars. Any comprehensive cost analysis, particularly of this magnitude, should examine the totality of any budgetary effects — accounting for all taxpayer dollars that are projected to be spent and received by the Treasury. An honest and comprehensive cost analysis requires this to ensure transparency of how taxpayer dollars are funding the border crisis.

Therefore, I request that CBO provide a report on the direct spending effects of increased migration on the federal budget and to include these direct spending effects in all future CBO baselines. Specifically, I request that CBO list every major entitlement program impacted by mass migration, legal and illegal, and its associated cost over 10 years.

¹ The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2024 to 2034, CBO, February 2024, <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/59946>.

² Ibid.

This report should include, but not be limited to, the following federal programs:

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Affordable Care Act Premium Tax Credits
- Supplemental Security Income
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Emergency Medicaid
- Full-Scope Medicaid
- Children’s Health Insurance Program
- The Head Start Program
- Medicare “Premium-Free” Part A
- HUD Public Housing and Section 8 Programs
- Title XX Block Grants
- Social Security
- Student Loans
- Pell Grants

It is imperative that we understand the full budgetary impact of allowing tens of millions of migrants to reside in the U.S. and receive federal benefits. For reference, attached to this letter is a comprehensive analysis entitled, *The Fiscal Burden of Illegal Immigration on United States Taxpayers 2023*, from the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which contains an itemized breakdown of spending on illegal immigrants; including, the cost to our entitlement system. While this report may not capture all the costs to the federal government, it is a good faith effort to look at the total fiscal impact of the border crisis, and I ask that CBO perform a similar comprehensive analysis. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Eric Davis with the House Committee on the Budget Majority staff at 202-226-7270. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J.C. Arrington', written in a cursive style.

Jodey C. Arrington
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget