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April 12, 2024

Congressman Jodey Arrington
Chairman
Congressman Brendan Boyle
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

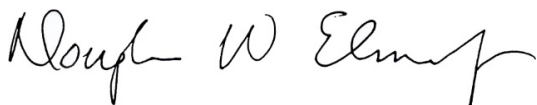
Dear Chairman Arrington and Ranking Member Boyle,

As a former director of the Congressional Budget Office—serving from 2009 to 2015—I take considerable interest in CBO’s ability to obtain the information it needs to effectively serve the Budget Committees and the Congress as a whole. From that perspective, I strongly support H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act.

Many officials around the U.S. Government understand the value of CBO’s analysis in the legislative process, the importance of that analysis being based on comprehensive and up-to-date data, and the care with which CBO handles the data that it receives. At the same time, those officials are understandably concerned about not violating confidentiality protections that apply to the data they collect. The result in some cases is that legal ambiguity about CBO’s authority to access confidential data hinders CBO’s ability to gather needed information in a timely and efficient manner, and thereby constrains CBO’s ability to serve the Congress appropriately.

H.R. 7032 would resolve such ambiguity, allowing CBO to obtain data from executive branch agencies without obstacles as long as CBO maintains the required degree of confidentiality. This clarification of CBO’s ability to access agency data would streamline CBO’s work process and help CBO to deliver the timely, rigorous, fact-based analysis on which the Congress depends.

Sincerely,



Douglas W. Elmendorf
Professor of Public Policy