



ECONOMIC POLICY INNOVATION CENTER

April 25, 2024

The Honorable Jodey Arrington
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
204 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brendan Boyle
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
507 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Arrington and Ranking Member Boyle:

Congress relies on the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to serve as its non-partisan official scorekeeper. Accurate cost estimates and budgetary and economic projections require high-quality and up-to-date data inputs.

The CBO was established to provide information to lawmakers without being solely reliant on the Executive Branch's analysis of legislation. However, the Executive Branch agencies that administer the laws will often have access to records and statistics which are vital to understanding the fiscal and economic impacts of programs and policy proposals. That is why the Congressional Budget Act authorized the Director of the CBO to "to secure information, data, estimates, and statistics directly from the various departments, agencies, and establishments of the executive branch of Government and the regulatory agencies and commissions of the Government." Indeed, the heart of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policy Making Act (2018) was to require government-wide data sharing (subject to privacy laws) with the goal of better policy evaluation and formation.

Unfortunately, the CBO has reported difficulty and delays in accessing data from agencies.

H.R. 7032, the Congressional Budget Office Data Sharing Act, would improve CBO's ability to access data from the Executive Branch while requiring CBO to maintain "the level of confidentiality required by law" to protect any sensitive information. The bill also includes a new requirement for CBO to report to Congress on CBO's requests for data from the Executive Branch.

Access to accurate and timely information is important for lawmakers to do their work for the American people, and we applaud your bipartisan efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,

Brittany Madni
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