



To: Members of the House Committee on the Budget
From: National Taxpayers Union
Date: May 15, 2024
Subject: NTU's Views on May 16th Committee Markup

I. Introduction and Key Taxpayer Considerations

On behalf of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, we write to express our views on several measures slated for consideration before the House Committee on the Budget on May 16, 2024. NTU applauds the Committee for your continued efforts to advance legislation that improves government efficiency, enhances transparency, and protects taxpayers from wasteful spending. As such, NTU strongly urges Committee members to support H.R. 8341, H.R. 8195, H.R. 8342, H.R. 8343, and The Debt Per Taxpayer Information Act.

H.R. 8341 - The Cost Estimates Improvement Act - Support

This bipartisan legislation by Reps. Cloud (R-TX), Case (D-HI), Meuser (R-PA), Golden (D-ME) and McClintock (R-CA), would remove a glaring omission in current Congressional Budget Office cost estimates of legislation: debt service.

Any homebuyer would get an estimate of mortgage payments before purchasing a home; similarly Congress should have an accurate sense of the debt service costs on legislation before they pass it.

This legislation would require the inclusion of debt service costs into official scoring by CBO. Since this is a capability that the CBO has and would not be an additional burden in terms of resources or complexity on their important work.

H.R. 8195 - The Strengthening Administrative PAYGO Act - Support

This legislation by Rep. Bergman (R-MI) and House Budget Committee Chairman Arrington (R-TX) addresses increases in budget deficits resulting from executive branch actions that boost spending without providing offsetting spending reductions.

Specifically, the Administrative PAYGO Act would require agencies to provide offsets for actions that increase spending by either \$1 billion over 10 years or \$100 million in any given year.

Similar measures were included in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023. However, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has used its waiver authority and interpreted the act in ways that circumvent these limitations.

The Strengthening Administrative PAYGO Act includes several helpful provisions. It eliminates the provision's sunset date and makes it more difficult for OMB to abuse the waiver process to bypass the requirement for spending offsets. The act would provide a much-needed check on deficit increases resulting from executive branch actions that increase federal spending beyond what Congress has authorized.

H.R. 8342 - The Improper Payments Transparency Act - Support

This bill by Reps. Panetta (D-CA) and Yakym (R-IN) will require the President's budget request to include detailed information on improper payments. More transparency regarding improper payments and information about how agencies are attempting to combat these wasteful practices will allow Congress to better course correct in the future.

H.R. 8343- The Enhancing Improper Payment Accountability Act - Support

This bill by Reps. Moore (R-UT) and Spanberger (D-VA) would codify some of the Government Accountability Office's recommendations to better secure payments from new programs that issue over \$100 million in payments per year. These programs would be subjected to more stringent reporting requirements and this legislation would require reports of anti-fraud controls and fraud risk management to Congress. It would also require the President's budget to include information on high-risk programs that aren't fulfilling their requirements.

H.R. ____ - The Debt Per Taxpayer Information Act - Support

Decades of overspending have driven the gross debt to over \$34 trillion. Chairman Arrington's Debt Per Taxpayer Information Act would help ensure that taxpayers and lawmakers are apprised of the scale of the debt that has been accumulated.

First, the bill requires the President's annual budget submission to include key metrics about the total debt held by the public, the gross federal debt, and the cost per taxpayer of any budget deficit in a given fiscal year.

Second, the bill would require that this information is also included in concurrent budget resolutions that the House and Senate use to set spending and revenue goals for the next fiscal year.

Third, it requires that W-2 Forms provided to tax filers include information showing the federal government's total outlays, revenues, the gross debt level, and the estimated debt per taxpayer.

By promoting transparency and awareness, Chairman Arrington's proposal not only empowers taxpayers with crucial information about the nation's fiscal health but also underscores the urgent need for lawmakers to address the unsustainable level of federal debt and lessen the burden on future generations of taxpayers.

II. Contact Information

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions about the content in this memo, please do not hesitate to reach out to Nicholas Johns at NJohns@ntu.org.