



LIMITING GOVERNMENT AND RECLAIMING THE CONSTITUTION

It is the goal of this proposal not only to enact reforms to create a smaller, more efficient government, but to also ensure that government respects and adheres to the limitations and intent of the Constitution. As the federal government's reach has grown, so has the Executive Branch's ever-extending grasp on power. This expanded power of the state has come at the expense of the freedom and prosperity of the American people, and its concentration in the administration has threatened the separation of powers so essential to restraining any one branch of government from becoming tyrannical. Conservatives understand that government has an important role in protecting its citizens' lives, liberty and property. A reasserted constitutionally limited government, devoted to these core functions, would operate more efficiently than current practice. More importantly, it would eliminate the arbitrary political obstacles to prosperity that have become Washington's hallmark. To that end, the RSC proposes specific reforms that would reclaim the mandate for government outlined in the U.S. Constitution by reasserting Congress's enumerated powers, increasing transparency, and eliminating government excess, overreaches, and abuses.

THE DANGERS OF HIGH SPENDING AND DEBT

Our national debt now tops \$19 trillion, larger than the annual gross domestic product (GDP), which measures the entire output of the U.S. economy. Our debt is accumulating even while federal revenues have grown to record levels. This leads to a single, undeniable conclusion: The federal government has a spending problem.

Government spending has grown to consume 21.2 percent of the economy this year, well above the historical average of 20.2 percent, a difference of almost \$200 billion in higher spending. Under current law, the federal government will grow to 23.1 percent of GDP by 2026 and more than \$9 trillion will be added to the national debt.

The problem is only getting worse. According to CBO, "Growth in spending—particularly for Social Security, health care, and interest payments on federal debt—outpaces growth in revenues over the coming 10 years." Compared to projections of the budget baseline made in August of last year, CBO's most recent projections from January show that spending and deficits are going up. Over the FY 2016 – 2025 period (overlapping last year's projections),

the cumulative deficit is projected to be \$1.5 trillion larger, 22% higher. Spending is now projected to be \$323 billion higher.¹

The growing federal government has significant negative consequences for the country and its people. The United States has fallen to 11th in the Index of Economic Freedom, from 6th place in 2009.² The large federal debt reduces investment, productivity, and wages, and federal interventions in the economy reduce the incentive to work, reducing the size of the labor market.³ When the federal government is too big and too intrusive, it interferes with our unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

As Arthur Brooks, President of the American Enterprise Institute, puts it, “when conservatives complain about ‘big government’ ... they are really angry about the intrusion of the state into people’s lives and the soul-crushing dependency it often creates – both of which are incompatible with the pursuit of happiness.”⁴

Therefore, the RSC believes that reducing the size and scope of the federal government – including eliminating ineffective and outdated programs – should be a central focus of any reform proposal.

STOP THE PRESIDENT’S UNCONSTITUTIONAL EXECUTIVE AMNESTY

President Obama has taken repeated, unilateral actions to rewrite America’s longstanding immigration laws - despite admitting at least 22 times that he had no authority to do so.⁵ In 2012, the president granted amnesty to at least half-a-million illegal immigrants through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. In November 2014, the president announced a series of executive actions that would expand amnesty to roughly 5 million more illegal immigrants.⁶ According to CBO, President Obama’s executive actions will cost American taxpayers \$14.9 billion in new welfare spending for illegal immigrants. That includes \$815 million in Social Security payments, \$330 million for Medicare, \$811 million

¹ Congressional Budget Office, “The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2016 to 2026”, January 25, 2016. <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/51129>

² Heritage Foundation, 2016 Index of Economic Freedom. <http://www.heritage.org/index/country/unitedstates>

³ Congressional Budget Office, “The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2016 to 2026”, January 25, 2016. <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/51129>

⁴ Arthur Brooks, The Conservative Heart, page 26.

⁵ Speaker John Boehner, 22 Times President Obama Said He Couldn’t Ignore or Create His Own Immigration Law, November 19, 2014. <http://www.speaker.gov/general/22-times-president-obama-said-he-couldn-t-ignore-or-create-his-own-immigration-law>

⁶ Dave Boyer, Washington Times, “Obama offers amnesty to 5 million illegal immigrants, defies GOP”, November 20, 2014. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/nov/20/obama-offers-amnesty-to-millions-of-illegal-immigr/?page=all>

for food stamps, \$1 billion in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments, \$1.5 billion for Obamacare and Medicaid, and \$10.2 billion in earned income and child tax credits.⁷

Though the House has passed a series of measures to stop and prevent funding to President Obama's executive amnesty, the courts also have stepped in to curb his unconstitutional overreach. Twenty-six states, led by Texas, filed a lawsuit in federal court to block the president's actions. On February 16, 2015, a federal judge in the Southern District of Texas enjoined in full the president's actions.⁸ Given the president's statements leading up to his actions, the House response, and the court's ruling, all three branches of the federal government have concurred that the president acted beyond his authority.⁹ On November 9, 2015 the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals again ruled against President Obama's efforts to shield undocumented immigrants.¹⁰ In its ruling, the majority affirmed that current immigration law "flatly does not permit the reclassification of millions of illegal aliens as lawfully present and thereby make them newly eligible for a host of federal and state benefits, including work authorization."

While it is appropriate that the courts intervened by temporarily halting the president's overreach, Congress should not sit idly by. To end the president's unconstitutional amnesty, this proposal eliminates funding for those illegal actions, and insists on the enforcement of existing immigration laws and the securing of our borders.

FULL VETTING OF REFUGEES ENTERING THE UNITED STATES

On December 2, 2015, two individuals opened fired on a conference room of county workers, killing 14 people. The attack, believed to be terrorist-inspired, was carried out by a Pakistani-born, U.S. permanent resident, who spent much of her life in Saudi Arabia, and her husband, of Pakistani descent. The shooters were believed to have been radicalized long before they wed, and their attack, inspired by Islamic terrorism.¹¹ In November, three coordinated teams of Islamic terrorists opened fire and detonated explosives at six sites across Paris, killing nearly 130 people. One of the terrorists involved was found to have

⁷ Congressional Budget Office, Letter to Senator Thad Cochran, Re: Budgetary Effects of Immigration- Related Provisions of the House Passed Version of H.R. 240, An Act Making Appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security, January 29, 2015. <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/114th-congress-2015-2016/costestimate/hr240.pdf>

⁸ United States District Judge Andrew Hanen, United States District Court For The Southern District Of Texas Brownsville Division, Memorandum and Order, February 16, 2015. http://www.tx.uscourts.gov/sites/txs/files/1-14-cv-254_145X20977588_0.pdf

⁹ Representative Bill Flores (TX-17), Flores Talks DHS Funding On The Rundown with Jose Diaz Balart, February 25, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9C2QI1WnCo>

¹⁰ Michelle Malkin, National Review, "Federal Courts Block Obama's Executive Illegal-Immigration Amnesty (Again)", November 11, 2015. <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/426878/obama-executive-illegal-immigration-amnesty-fifth-circuit>

¹¹ New York Times, "What Investigators Know About the San Bernardino Shooting", December 10, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/12/02/us/california-mass-shooting-san-bernardino.html?_r=2

entered the European Union through Greece, posing as a refugee and taking advantage of relocation programs.¹²

In response to the attacks on our allies' soil, and the threat of further attacks on American soil, the House passed Representatives Michael McCaul and Richard Hudson's H.R. 4038, the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act (SAFE) of 2015. The SAFE Act requires the Secretary of Homeland Security and the head of the FBI to sign off on any refugee admitted to the United States from Iraq and Syria, or any individual who traveled to Iraq or Syria during the past five years.¹³ The bill is also designed to ensure that a thorough FBI background check and Homeland Security screening are performed on each refugee.¹⁴ It is imperative we stop the Obama Administration's assault on our national security and his negligence to the American people. This proposal would prevent any funding from being directed to admit refugees from Syria and Iraq until the stringent requirements to ensure American's safety are in place.

COMMITMENT TO THE UNBORN

One of the most tragic legacies of the 20th century is the millions of innocent lives lost through abortion. The first duty of government is to defend the lives of its citizens from threats to their survival. It is clear that current federal policies fail to protect our nation's most vulnerable. The RSC prioritizes the sanctity of human life by prohibiting federal funds from going to entities, including Planned Parenthood, that provide abortions.

This prohibition of funding comes on the heels of an array of House activity to stop federal funding to Planned Parenthood. Last year, the House passed Rep. Diane Black's bill, H.R. 3134, the Defund Planned Parenthood Act of 2015, to prohibit funding for Planned Parenthood or its affiliates for one year, pending a federal investigation into the illegal sale of fetal tissue. The House also passed Representative Trent Franks' H.R. 3504, the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act to protect infant survivors of abortion, and to ensure that all infants born alive receive the same degree of care, regardless of their gestational age. Rep. Sean Duffy's H.R. 3495, the Women's Public Health and Safety Act, was also passed by the House. The bill would amend Medicaid to allow states to prevent abortion

¹² Jon Henley, The Guardian, "Paris terror attacks 'carried out by three coordinated teams of gunmen'", November 14, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/14/syrian-greece-refugee-paris-attacks-killers>

¹³ H.R. 4038, the American Security Against Foreign Enemies Act, Final Vote Results For Roll Call 643, November 19, 2015. <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2015/roll643.xml>

¹⁴ Camila Domonske, National Public Radio, "House Votes To Increase Security Checks On Refugees From Iraq, Syria", November 19, 2015. <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/11/19/456651251/house-votes-to-increase-security-checks-on-refugees-from-iraq-syria>

providers from receiving funding. Finally, House Republicans established a special task force to investigate crimes against the unborn and the illegal sale of fetal tissue.¹⁵

House Republicans will continue to fight to protect those with strong conscience objections to abortion. The Abortion Non-Discrimination Act would ensure any healthcare provider who is opposed to abortion will not be forced to participate in the killing of an unborn child. The RSC would stop any federal funding from being used to force the unwilling to participate in an abortion service against their moral beliefs.¹⁶

DEFENSE OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT

In the Supreme Court's recent ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, America witnessed firsthand efforts to dismantle the First Amendment. Following the ruling, individuals and organizations that hold the belief that marriage is between one man and one woman may face federal discrimination for their sincerely held religious beliefs. H.R. 2802, The First Amendment Defense Act, an important RSC Initiative introduced by Representative Raul Labrador, seeks to protect Americans' right to live according to their beliefs - without discrimination, persecution, or retaliation from the federal government. The RSC would protect our First Amendment rights, uphold the Constitution, restore religious freedom, and prevent discrimination against our churches, non-profits, and faith-based organizations.

PROTECT THE SECOND AMENDMENT

Self-defense has become a matter of national security and this proposal reflects that reality. Today all 50 states and Washington, D.C. issue permits for some manner of concealed carry. Across the country, arbitrary anti-gun "may-issue" permit standards, which empower governments to grant or not grant you your Second Amendment rights, are being converted to "shall-issue" standards, which require governments to recognize your right to carry a gun. Constitutional carry (permitless carry) is also sweeping the country - from two permitless states in 2009 to 12 states today that do not prohibit at least a limited version of Constitutional carry. Still, leftist politicians holding the White House, governors' mansions, and local offices continue to play politics with law abiding gun owners' God-given rights. That is why the RSC calls for action on legislation introduced by Representative Marlin Stutzman including H.R. 4321, which defunds President Obama's executive overreach on gun rights, and H.R. 923, the Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act, which allows gun owners

¹⁵ Alan Fram, Associated Press, "The Republican chairman of a special House panel investigating Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers has issued the first three subpoenas to groups she says are withholding information", February 16, 2016. <http://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2016-02-16/house-gop-subpoenas-3-groups-in-planned-parenthood-probe>

¹⁶ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, "The Need for the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act", October 23, 2015. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/conscience-protection/upload/The-Need-for-The-Abortion-Non-Discrimination-Act.pdf>

to actually defend themselves across state lines while preserving state legislatures' role in choosing permitting policies appropriate to their state.

REQUIRE THE PRESIDENT TO FULFILL HIS CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY TO ENFORCE THE LAW

Article II, Section 3, of the U.S. Constitution states that the president “shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.” Unfortunately, President Obama has failed to fulfill his Constitutional duty. He has delayed the Obamacare employer mandate, refused to enforce our immigration laws, granted welfare work requirement waivers in violation of the 1996 welfare reform law, failed to enforce federal drug laws in states that permit medical and recreational marijuana use, and halted the prosecution of low-level drug offenders under mandatory minimum sentencing laws.

Under current law, if the attorney general determines that a law is unconstitutional and no longer enforces it, he is required to submit a report to Congress. That model should be implemented throughout the federal bureaucracy. If a federal agency decides it will no longer enforce a law for any reason, the head of that agency should notify Congress and provide the legal reasoning behind their decision. This proposal is based on Representative Ron DeSantis’s Faithful Execution of the Law Act.

Because of the court system’s strict standing precedent, it can be unnecessarily difficult for Congress to challenge a president who does not uphold the law. The Legislative Branch should have the ability to authorize a lawsuit against the Executive Branch with an expedited process for consideration by the courts if the president fails to faithfully execute the law. This proposal is based on Representative Trey Gowdy’s Executive Needs to Faithfully Observe and Respect Congressional Enactments of the Law (ENFORCE the Law) Act.

STOP NET NEUTRALITY

A free and open Internet has been one of the greatest catalysts for innovation, opportunity, and economic growth. Rigid government regulation of the Internet will only stifle prosperity and progress. Congress should repeal the Federal Communication Commission’s February 26, 2015, rule reclassifying broadband Internet access as a telecommunication service under Title II of the Communications Act of 1934. This proposal is based on H.R. 1212, the Internet Freedom Act, introduced by Representative Marsha Blackburn.

PROTECT PRIVATE PROPERTY FROM GOVERNMENT SEIZURE

The Fifth Amendment provides that “private property [shall not] be taken for public use, without just compensation.” However, the Supreme Court put this important guarantee of private property rights in jeopardy in *Kelo v. City of New London*. That ruling determined local

governments may use eminent domain to seize private property and then sell it for development purposes. To prevent this type of government abuse, federal economic development funding to local governments should be dependent on states' restraint from using eminent domain for private economic development. This proposal is based on H.R. 3013, the Private Property Rights Protection Act.

STOP CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE ABUSE

Many Americans assume that their due process rights are automatically honored by the government. Under current law, federal, state and local police can seize an individual's property unless that individual can prove that he or she acquired it legally. This must change. H.R. 540, the Fifth Amendment Integrity Restoration (FAIR) Act, introduced by Representative Tim Walberg, would protect our constitutional rights and save American families from a costly and messy legal process to regain what is legally theirs. This legislation would raise the standard to seize assets and reduce incentives in law for states and localities to unnecessarily seize property in civil forfeiture.

REFORM THE ANTIQUITIES ACT

Under the Antiquities Act of 1906, the president is authorized to unilaterally proclaim national monuments on federal lands. Like other unchecked powers given to the Executive Branch, this authority has been abused. President Obama has placed this designation on more than 260 million acres, and administration officials have been quoted as saying they "have big, big ambitions this year."¹⁷ Because a national monument designation imposes strict restrictions on land use, the Antiquities Act can hurt local economies that rely on logging, mineral development, energy creation, or recreational activities on the federal land. Before an area is designated as a national monument, the designation should be approved by an act of Congress.

HOLD GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ACCOUNTABLE

The past few years have brought us shocking news stories about senior government employees who have abused their positions of power. Whether it is employees at the General Services Administration (GSA) taking lavish vacations on the taxpayers' dime or the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) making expensive parody videos and targeting conservatives, mismanagement and waste by federal bureaucrats is unacceptable. Unfortunately, the federal government has limited options to discipline federal workers. Often employees who are under investigation are simply placed on paid leave. Federal agencies should have the ability to fire Senior Executive Service employees for serious violations or place them on

¹⁷ Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post, "Obama designates new national monuments in the California desert", February 12, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/obama-to-designate-new-national-monuments-in-the-california-desert/2016/02/11/5b77db4e-c6be-11e5-a4aa-f25866ba0dc6_story.html

unpaid leave while they are under investigation. This commonsense proposal is based on Representative Mike Kelly's H.R. 722, the Government Employee Accountability Act.

DON'T WASTE TAXPAYER FUNDS ON EXPENSIVE CONFERENCES

In 2013, it was reported that the GSA held a lavish conference in Las Vegas, charging more than \$800,000 to taxpayers. In 2012 alone, taxpayers funded \$340 million for 894 conferences for federal employees. While it can be important for federal workers to attend certain events and conferences, the waste, fraud, and abuse must stop. Spending limits should be put in place for conferences, and the heads of federal agencies should be required to personally approve the most expensive conferences.

LIMIT BONUSES FOR FEDERAL WORKERS TO A REASONABLE LEVEL

At a time when we have a ballooning national debt, we cannot afford to hand out lavish bonuses to senior federal workers. In 2014, 68 percent of Senior Executive Service workers received bonuses at an average of \$10,560 per employee.¹⁸ There should be reasonable limits on the size of bonuses that can be awarded and the number of senior employees who can receive an award.

ESTABLISH CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Unsurprisingly, a recent survey found that customer satisfaction with government service has reached an all-time low.¹⁹ Because so much of what the government does is serving the public, the federal government should establish standards for customer service and improve its response time to citizen requests.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORM

Federal regulatory agencies spend tens of billions of dollars each year developing and enacting regulations— many of which are enforceable by fines or even imprisonment.²⁰ As the size and scope of the federal government has dramatically expanded, the criminal code has ballooned. The U.S. Department of Justice and the American Bar Association cannot even accurately quantify the number of laws that impose a criminal penalty.²¹ Many people in violation of the law have no idea they are breaking a federal law, so they lack a “guilty

¹⁸ Kellie Lunney, Government Executive, “More Senior Execs Got Bonuses in 2014, and the Payouts Were Bigger”, November 18, 2015. <http://www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/2015/11/more-senior-execs-got-bonuses-fiscal-2014-previous-year/123812/>

¹⁹ Kristiana Mork, Daily Signal, “Satisfaction With Federal Government Services Reaches New Low”, January 26, 2016. <http://dailysignal.com/2016/01/26/satisfaction-with-federal-government-services-reaches-new-low/>

²⁰ Competitive Enterprise Institute, Red Tapeworm 2014: The High Cost of Overcriminalization. <https://cei.org/blog/red-tapeworm-2014-high-cost-overcriminalization>

²¹ Michael B. Mukasey and Paul Larkin, Heritage Foundation, The Perils of Overcriminalization. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/02/the-perils-of-overcriminalization>

mind” (*mens rea*) component found in most criminal penalties. Legislation like H.R. 4002, the Criminal Code Improvement Act, which would establish a default *mens rea* standard when one is not supplied by federal law, is essential to slow down the rapid expansion of criminal penalties in our justice system. Enforcing a *mens rea* standard ensures that only those that intend to commit a crime are criminally liable, and prevents the government agencies like the EPA, from destroying innocent lives through excessively burdensome regulations.²²

Overcriminalization traps not only the convicted in a cycle of poverty and incarceration, but also harms the families many leave behind while they are behind bars. Several commonsense reforms targeting non-violent offenders have already made their way through the House Judiciary Committee.²³ ²⁴ The RSC recommends that the House Judiciary Committee continue its review of the criminal code and that reforms addressing overcriminalization and *mens rea* be enacted.

REDUCE GOVERNMENT COMPETITION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Government at all levels is increasingly involved with providing goods and services that are better left to the private sector. The Obama Administration is even encouraging local governments to offer broadband Internet service, overriding state laws through regulation and offering incentives in the tax code.²⁵

The federal government should have a “yellow pages test:” if a good or service can be procured from private enterprise, through ordinary business channels, the government should not attempt to carry on any commercial activity. Government should be restricted to its core constitutional duties and only provide services that are appropriate in the federal government’s defined domain. The RSC also recommends terminating the Government Publishing Office (GPO) and outsourcing its few remaining functions to the private sector.

MODERNIZE FEDERAL IT INFRASTRUCTURE

²² House Judiciary Committee, Criminal Justice Reform Initiative. <http://judiciary.house.gov/index.cfm/criminal-justice-reform-initiative>

²³ House Judiciary Committee, “House Judiciary Committee Approves Bills To Address Federal Over-Criminalization”, November 18, 2015. <http://judiciary.house.gov/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=ED94519C-05D8-46EB-A5C7-3A8ACC55B5F9>

²⁴ House Judiciary Committee, “Goodlatte Statement At Markup Of H.R. 759, The “Recidivism Risk Reduction Act””, February 11, 2016. <http://judiciary.house.gov/index.cfm/press-releases?ID=D67708E1-8805-4357-9077-4B7E929B7E13>

²⁵ Wall Street Journal, “Tom Wheeler’s Other Web Takeover”, February 24, 2015. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/tom-wheeler-s-other-web-takeover-1424821807>

Over the last decade, the federal government has spent \$600 billion on information technology infrastructure.²⁶ Unfortunately, an estimated 20 to 30 percent of our annual IT spending could have been reduced with better management.²⁷ Most recently, we have seen the Obama Administration’s disastrous rollout of its Obamacare website, which has cost hundreds of millions of dollars.²⁸ Instead, federal agencies should modernize their IT infrastructure, take advantage of new technologies, and coordinate with each other, ensuring America has the 21st century government its citizens deserve. This proposal is based on Representative Darrell Issa’s Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act.

AUDIT AND REFORM THE FEDERAL RESERVE

Article I of the Constitution gives Congress the authority to coin money and to regulate the dollar’s value. To remove politics from decisions about monetary, prudential, and supervisory policy, Congress outsourced this responsibility to an independent Federal Reserve. For too long, the Federal Reserve has operated without full transparency. Under current law, Congress is prohibited from accessing all of the Federal Reserve’s books. GAO, which serves as Congress’s non-partisan watchdog, should be allowed to audit the Federal Reserve just as it does other agencies. Only through increased transparency can Congress conduct necessary oversight and provide accountability to the American people. This commonsense proposal is based on H.R. 24, the Federal Reserve Transparency Act, and H.R. 113, the Federal Reserve Accounting and Transparency Act, introduced by Representative Scott Garrett.

This proposal also recommends the creation of a Centennial Monetary Commission, such as the one proposed by Representative Kevin Brady in H.R. 2912. This commission should examine how the Fed’s policies have affected the U.S. economy and make recommendations to Congress for potential reforms.

TELL THE TAXPAYERS WHERE THEIR DOLLARS ARE BEING SPENT

With the federal government spending about \$4 trillion each year—an amount equal to almost \$12,700 for every citizen—taxpayers deserve to know how their hard-earned dollars are spent. Federal agencies should publicly disclose each program they run, how much it costs, who benefits from it, and if the program is duplicative of other federal programs. This

²⁶ Vivek Kundra, U.S. Chief Information Officer “25 Point Implementation Plan to Reform Federal Information Technology Management”, December 9, 2010. <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/digital-strategy/25-point-implementation-plan-to-reform-federal-it.pdf>

²⁷ “One Trillion Reasons,” Technology CEO Council.
http://www.techceocouncil.org/news/2010/10/01/reports/one_trillion_reasons/

²⁸ Brett Norman and Jason Millman, Politico, “Doubts about ACA site repair date”, November 13, 2013.
<http://www.politico.com/story/2013/11/darrell-issa-obamacare-hearing-099788>

proposal is based on H.R. 598, the Taxpayers Right to Know Act, introduced by Representative Tim Walberg.

IMPROVE THE FOIA PROCESS

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allows citizens to request records from federal agencies. To improve and modernize this process, this proposal recommends the creation of a single online portal for citizens to submit and track their requests. Further, agencies should establish a presumption of openness when complying with requests, should justify their reasoning when withholding requested records, and should make public records that are regularly requested. This proposal is based on H.R. 653, the FOIA Oversight and Implementation Act, introduced by Representative Darrell Issa.

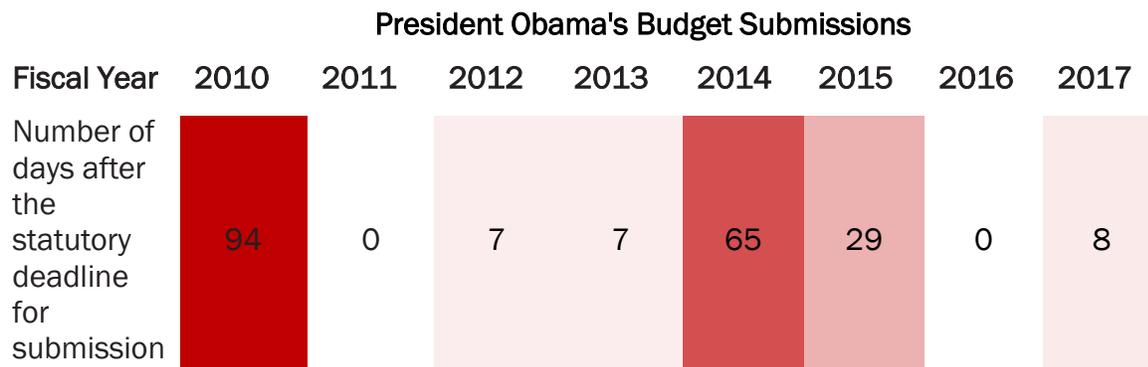
REQUIRE DISCLOSURE ON TAXPAYER-FUNDED ADVERTISEMENTS

In the interest of transparency and accountability, the public should know when taxpayer dollars are used to promote government projects. Television and radio advertisements, mailers, and brochures that are purchased at taxpayer expense should include a disclaimer identifying this fact, as well as the cost of the advertisement.

FIXING THE BROKEN BUDGET PROCESS

Washington liberals like nothing more than spending other people's money. Where they frequently fail, however, is in following the process that, by law, directs government spending.

Throughout his administration, President Obama has shown contempt for the budget process. Two-thirds of his budget submissions were submitted after the statutory deadline, and several submissions were delayed by two or three months.



Former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has single-handedly shut down the Senate's budget process four times in the last six years. The Senate failed to pass a budget for FY 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2015. The Senate did not pass a single regular appropriations bill in FY 2011, 2013, 2014, and 2015. In FY 2016, even with a conferenced budget agreed upon between the two houses, Senator Reid held every appropriations bill hostage until well after the fiscal year began. He did so to secure his demand of increased federal spending, which culminated in a thousand page omnibus spending bill unveiled only three days before it was passed.

The federal budget process is undeniably broken, and Congress shares some of the responsibility. Too often, procedural rules are waived that would otherwise restrain out-of-control spending. Massive omnibus appropriations bills—written behind closed doors—come to a vote on the House floor well after the fiscal year they fund has already begun. That leaves little time for members and staff to review the legislation, as was the previously-noted case in FY 2016.

Fiscal Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of Days After Start of Fiscal Year Before Government Was Funded	154	108	176	83	198	78

In FY 2016, after half a decade of failed budgets in the Democrat controlled Senate, the Republican majority in the House and the newly-elected Republican majority in the Senate worked together to agree on a conferenced budget. This success was an important first step toward restoring the broken budget process, but on its own, passing a budget is insufficient. This proposal lays the foundation for the House and Senate to once again complete their work on the budget, and then to move on to consider all 12 regular appropriations bills under a punctual, open process. Further, this proposal includes the policies necessary to advance the reforms to mandatory entitlement spending that are bankrupting our nation’s future, allowing Congress to get to work restoring the American promise for this and future generations.

FINISHING THE HOUSE’S WORK: IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET

For half a decade, both the Republican Study Committee and House Budget Committee budgets have included major reforms to ensure the solvency of our social safety net programs, which would prevent the coming fiscal crises and a devastating bankrupting of our nation. Too often, however, the bold policies outlined in these budgets fail to come to fruition. To correct this problem, proposal includes the budget enforcement provisions of the RSC Terms of Credit Act, introduced as H.R. 3771 by RSC Chairman Bill Flores.

The Terms of Credit Act establishes an accountability measure to force House authorizing committees to produce legislation carrying the assumptions of the Budget Resolution into force through the budget reconciliation process. In the event a committee fails to report legislation that meets the minimum budgetary savings thresholds called for in the budget, the Members of the House would be allowed to advanced privileged legislation to make up the difference. Finally, if the House fails to pass legislation fully meeting the reconciliation targets within 180 days, it would be prohibited from adjourning until the work is complete

RECLAIM CONGRESS’S POWER OF THE PURSE

Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution entrusts the power of the federal purse with Congress alone. As Madison makes clear in Federalist 58, “the House of Representatives cannot only

refuse, but they alone can propose, the supplies requisite for the support of government.”²⁹ However, the use of the power of the purse is only effective when Congress is informed and involved in the spending process. The current practice does not measure up. This proposal includes a number of reforms to correct this problem and restore this quintessential congressional power.

Too often, Congress has allowed the executive branch to use fees and other revenue streams virtually unchecked, with disastrous results. President Obama has violated the separation of powers through his use of executive actions. GAO found that the Obama Administration violated the Antideficiency Act by transferring dangerous terrorists from Guantanamo Bay.³⁰ The U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) diverted user fees to implement the president’s executive amnesty actions without congressional authorization until an injunction from a Federal court stopped that process from moving forward. Spending of this nature is estimated by OMB to exceed \$534 billion in FY 2017.³¹ This proposal calls for changes to authorizing statutes that will require explicit congressional authority to spend offsetting collections and receipts.

Similarly, federal agencies should not be able to use fines to give themselves more money to spend. Representative Markwayne Mullin’s Fines in Need of Extensive Reform (FINER) Act would require revenues from fines to be deposited in the Treasury instead of being used as an agency slush fund.

UNAUTHORIZED SPENDING

Since 1835, the Rules of the House (clause 2(a)(1) of rule XXI) have required that appropriations may only be for purposes authorized by law. This rule is rarely enforced because appropriations bills are routinely considered under legislative procedures that waive existing budget rules. As a result, much of the discretionary budget is spent without oversight or accountability. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 included \$310 billion in appropriations not authorized by law, constituting almost one-third of the entire discretionary budget.³²

The House Appropriations Committee should disclose the current funding levels for unauthorized programs in the committee reports accompanying the appropriations bill legislative text. Representative Tom McClintock has put forward a modest proposal to prohibit consideration of appropriations bills that increase funding above their most recently appropriated amount for unauthorized programs.

²⁹ James Madison, Federalist #58, the Federalist Papers.

³⁰ Government Accountability Office, Department of Defense—Compliance with Statutory Notification Requirement.

³¹ Office of Management and Budget, Analytical Perspectives, Budget of the United States Government, FY 2017

³² Congressional Budget Office, Unauthorized Appropriations and Expiring Authorizations, January, 2016.

This proposal would go a step further by prohibiting the Rules Committee from allowing consideration of legislation that waives the House Rule against unauthorized spending in an appropriations bill.

END THE POLITICAL THREAT OF DEFAULT

To prevent the possibility that the U.S. defaults on its debt, this proposal recommends implementing Representative Tom McClintock’s Default Prevention Act (H.R. 692). This RSC Initiative requires the Treasury to make timely payments of principal and interest, including on interest owed to the Social Security Trust Fund, in the event the statutory debt limit is reached. To accomplish this, the Treasury is permitted to issue debt that is not subject to the statutory limit.

The Default Prevention Act is a commonsense measure to protect the full faith and credit of the United States. Those who oppose it risk jeopardizing the nation’s standing in the world and seek to use the threat of default as a political weapon.

IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT OF BUDGET RULES

The Budget Act’s enforcement provisions can be waived with only a majority vote, which allows the majority party in Congress to ignore its provisions at will. This proposal adopts a requirement that a two-thirds majority is needed to waive points of order authorized by the Budget Act. The budget also makes it out of order to consider a rule or suspension of the rules waiving such points of order.

DISCLOSURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ON EMERGENCY SPENDING

This proposal also reforms congressional abuse of “emergency spending” to skirt spending limits set by the Budget Control Act and budget resolutions. According to CBO, net supplemental spending totaled \$99 billion in the 1980s and \$86 billion in the 1990s. By contrast, from 2000 to 2009, supplemental appropriations often exceeded \$100 billion in a single year, and the cumulative total over those years was more than \$907 billion—ten times the total in the preceding decade.

This proposal would require the sponsor of legislation that contains emergency spending—or the Chair of the House Budget Committee in circumstances where there is no House sponsor—to submit a statement in the Congressional Record explaining why an emergency designation is necessary. It would also require a three-fifths majority vote in the House to approve legislation that is designated as emergency spending.

WELFARE SPENDING DISCLOSURE IN THE PRESIDENT’S BUDGET

In the 113th Congress, House Republicans adopted a new rule requiring budget resolutions in the House provide a ten-year outlook of means-tested welfare spending. In the interest of transparency, this provision would extend that rule to presidential budget submissions.

LONG-TERM BUDGETING

It is clear that the federal government faces a long-term budget problem. According to GAO, under one projected scenario, taxes would need to be increased by 52 percent over the next 75 years to keep the national debt held by the public at its 2014 level.³³ Unfortunately, current budget rules only look at a short ten-year window. This narrow view gives lawmakers and the public an inaccurate picture of the nation's fiscal health and encourages gimmicks that allow enormous, future spending increases.

The RSC proposes to extend the baseline beyond the current ten-year window. It would require CBO to estimate the baseline for discretionary spending, Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, other direct spending, and net interest as a percentage of GDP for each of the three ten-fiscal-year periods following the initial ten-year window. CBO would be required to measure major legislation against this long-term baseline, including each of the three ten-year windows. Congressional budget resolutions and the president's budget request would also be required to include long-term projections.

INTERGENERATIONAL ACCOUNTING

It is important for policymakers to have a clear and accurate picture of the fiscal future of America. The so-called "fiscal gap" is the present value of projected expenditures less the present value of projected receipts. The fiscal gap provides a truer understanding of the actual long-term debt. The RSC would require CBO to analyze the fiscal gap over a 75-year window to show the burden irresponsible fiscal policies have placed on our children and grandchildren. This proposal is supported by at least 17 Nobel Laureates in Economics.³⁴

FIX THE BUDGETARY TREATMENT OF HIGHWAY PROGRAMS

The budgetary treatment of the highway program contributes to overspending and unaccountability. Normal discretionary spending is limited by the budget caps and sequestration, while mandatory spending is limited by the House CutGO rule and statutory pay-as-you-go requirements. Under current law, the budget authority for transportation programs is treated as mandatory spending, while outlays from the Highway Trust Fund are

³³ Government Accountability Office, Fiscal Outlook: Federal Fiscal Outlook.

³⁴ The INFORM Act, Nobel Laureate Supporters of The Inform Act.

treated as discretionary spending. This has the effect of exempting transportation programs from any of the standard budget enforcement procedures.³⁵

The president has proposed shifting highway spending to be fully mandatory, further weakening congressional oversight and control of the program. This is the opposite of the approach we should take.

REPORT ON THE COST OF LEGISLATION ENACTED EACH YEAR

Unsurprisingly, the federal government does not currently track the cost of newly enacted laws each year. This proposal calls for the OMB to prepare a report each calendar year that details the cost of each law signed by the president.

DISCLOSURE OF CHANGES IN MANDATORY PROGRAMS (CHIMPS)

Many appropriations bills include changes in mandatory programs (CHIMPS). Because of CBO scoring conventions, an appropriations bill can offset increases in discretionary spending by reducing mandatory spending in the first year of the budget window. These CHIMPS are often just gimmicks that shift the timing of mandatory spending, and allow increases in discretionary spending year after year using the same “offset” repeatedly. CBO scores CHIMPS in appropriations bills, but neither CBO nor the House Appropriations Committee generally disclose this information. This proposal would require the House Appropriations Committee’s accompanying committee reports to disclose CHIMPS.

REQUIRE OMB TO REPORT UNOBLIGATED AND REPROGRAMMED BALANCES

As a part of the Supplemental Materials to the president’s budget request, OMB prepares a document called the Balances of Budget Authority that includes information on end-of-year balances that remain unspent. This proposal requires OMB to provide Congress and the public with up-to-date information about unobligated balances. Each month, OMB would be required to produce a public report that includes a detailed description of unobligated balances in each account, with details including the years from which the balances were originally made available.

Funding is sometimes diverted from its original congressional intent to some different purpose by reprogramming funds from one account to another. Authority for shifting funds is often provided in appropriations bills to allow reasonable flexibility to accommodate unforeseen events. While some large reprogramming actions are reported to the House and Senate appropriations committees, most of this activity occurs in the dark. Under this plan,

³⁵ Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, Why Lawmakers Should Fix The Budgetary Treatment Of The Highway Trust Fund.

the OMB would be required to report to the House and Senate anytime funds are reprogrammed from one account to another, and to include a justification for the shift.

IMPLEMENT THE CUT RESOLUTION

Too often, Congress falls short when it comes to executive branch oversight. The RSC would require the House Majority Leader to bring a quarterly rescissions bill before the House to ensure that agencies spend taxpayer dollars appropriately. Any rescissions approved by the House would be dedicated to deficit reduction via a reduction to the 302(a) allocation for that fiscal year. This is modeled on the Cut Resolution.

STRENGTHEN THE SPENDING REDUCTION ACCOUNTS

House rules require appropriations bills to include spending reduction accounts. These accounts allow members to offer amendments to reduce spending elsewhere in the bill and allocate those amounts to deficit reduction.

Unfortunately, although the House has voted on bills and amendments that reduce the level of discretionary spending, spending cuts protected in spending reduction accounts are not applied against the House Appropriations Committee's overall 302(a) allocation, and this allows those savings to be redirected by the committee to spending in subsequent appropriations bills and conference reports.

This proposal would require spending reduction accounts under the standing Rules of the House. This proposal would further strengthen the spending reduction accounts by requiring that any funds allocated to a spending reduction account would also be cut from the House Appropriations Committee's 302(a) allocation, protecting the cuts from being spent later in the appropriations process.

BASELINE BUDGETING

Under current law, CBO's baseline spending projections automatically assume higher spending each year. Based on Representative Rob Woodall's H.R. 3186, the Baseline Reform Act, this proposal recommends that the pro-spending bias for discretionary spending be removed from the baseline.

MAKE EARMARK BAN PERMANENT

Until House Republicans adopted an earmark moratorium in the 112th Congress, the number of earmarks included in appropriations and authorization bills was skyrocketing. These requests often diverted taxpayer resources to special interests, greased the wheels of Washington's spending machine, and set a poor example of fiscal responsibility.

The Rules of the House speak at length about earmark disclosure, but they do not actually ban them. This proposal would amend the House rules to make it out of order in the House to consider any legislation that includes an earmark. This proposal would also prevent the Rules Committee from reporting a rule or order that would waive a ban on earmarks.

REALISTIC SCORING

At the beginning of the 114th Congress, the House adopted a new rule that requires CBO and the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) to incorporate the macroeconomic effects of major legislation into the budgetary scores of such legislation. This practice—called “dynamic scoring”—takes into account the real-world economic impact of new laws.

This commonsense proposal should be enshrined into law by enacting legislation similar to Representative Tom Price’s Pro-Growth Budgeting Act. That way, before voting, lawmakers can be sure they have the most accurate information regarding the fiscal impact of major legislation (defined as having a fiscal effect of at least .25 percent of GDP in any year within the budget window).

DISCLOSE THE REAL COST OF FEDERAL CREDIT PROGRAMS

The RSC proposes increasing transparency in federal budgeting by using fair-value accounting for federal insurance programs. This ensures the true costs of these programs are included in the federal budget. A CBO report shows that the current accounting rules hide the real cost to the taxpayers of several programs. For instance, under the current rules, student loans generate \$135 billion for the Treasury, however the program actually costs \$88 billion.³⁶ This proposal is based on Representative Scott Garrett’s the Budget and Accounting Transparency Act (H.R. 119).

REESTABLISH THE BYRD COMMITTEE

Established at the onset of World War II, the Committee on the Elimination of Nonessential Federal Programs (better known as the Byrd Committee, after its first chairman, Senator Harry Byrd), sought to identify wasteful, duplicative, and otherwise nonessential federal spending programs that should be eliminated. The committee regularly reported billions of dollars of savings in recommended spending reductions and program eliminations that were adopted by Congress and signed into law, reducing the deficit and ensuring funding was available for vital priorities, like funding the war effort in the 1940s. From its creation in 1941 to its termination in 1974, the committee served as a rare example of the federal government pursuing fiscal responsibility rather than profligacy. This proposal calls for the

³⁶ Congressional Budget Office, Fair-Value Estimates of the Cost of Selected Federal Credit Programs for 2015 to 2024.

reestablishment of this committee and requires Congress to act on the resulting recommendations.

BUDGETING SMARTER

Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution provides that “No money shall be drawn from the treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law”. While mandatory spending driven by formulas written into permanent law constitutes the majority of federal spending. The power of the purse is principally executed through the annual Congressional appropriations process. This process controls discretionary spending, which makes up about one-third of total federal spending each year. It is important that Congress allocates funding wisely, while ensuring the resources are appropriately stewarded for the future. Such stewardship is essential if we are to pass to future generations a legacy of opportunity rather than an unbearable burden of debt.

The Budget Control Act (BCA), signed into law by President Obama in 2011 after a sustained effort by the RSC and conservatives to “cut, cap and balance” the federal budget, imposed caps on discretionary spending through 2021. Unfortunately, the BCA imposed an arbitrary “firewall” between defense and non-defense spending. This created a false parity between essential priorities, such as ensuring national security, and less crucial activities of the federal government, along with the paternalistic programs that would be better managed at the state level.

The RSC proposal breaks down this firewall to ensure that Congress can carry out its Constitutional responsibilities while respecting the 10th Amendment by eliminating programs that are not provided for under the powers enumerated in Article I.

The RSC proposes reducing total regular discretionary spending to \$974 billion in Fiscal Year 2017, with defense spending increased to \$574 billion and non-defense cut to \$400 billion. Over the next decade, non-defense discretionary would be reduced by \$1.4 trillion below the CBO baseline, but would still be allowed to grow each year.

This proposal lays out a menu of discretionary spending reforms that Congress should implement, saving taxpayer billions of dollars each year.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES:

REPEAL UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) CATFISH INSPECTION PROGRAM

The USDA Catfish Inspection Program should be repealed beginning in FY 2017, saving \$14 million annually. This duplicative program was “airdropped” into the 2008 Farm Bill without

prior consideration and was disappointingly maintained in the recent 2014 Farm Bill. The Food and Drug Administration is charged with inspecting all seafood and fish, but catfish is now inexplicably the responsibility of the USDA. GAO has made it clear that such an arrangement is nonsensical, issuing a report titled “Responsibility for Inspecting Catfish Should Not Be Assigned to USDA”.³⁷

ELIMINATE RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS (RCDG)

The Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG) program is meant to provide grants to subsidize rural cooperatives. Grantees are only subject to a 25-percent cost-sharing requirement and may use the funds for the operation, expansion, or startup of a cooperative. Living in rural areas comes with many advantages for those who choose to do so, but the general taxpayer should not be forced to subsidize providing costly conveniences for those who make that choice. The RCDG program should be eliminated in FY 2017, saving \$22 million per year.

ELIMINATE RURAL RENEWABLE ENERGY SUBSIDIES

The Renewable Energy Subsidies program should be eliminated beginning in FY 2017, saving the taxpayers \$500,000 in discretionary funding per year. This program subsidizes the development of renewable energy programs for small rural businesses and agriculture producers. The federal government should not be in the business of subsidizing source-specific types of energy that would be better produced by the private market. According to GAO, this is just one of 679 different economically unsound initiatives meant to promote greenenergy.

PROHIBIT FUNDING FOR NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH STANDARDS

The Obama Administration has undertaken a high-profile effort to force local school districts to serve “healthy” lunches. These efforts have proved costly for schools and unpopular with students. Recent appropriations bills have allowed some schools the opportunity to opt out of the standards. Beginning in FY 2017, funding for the National School Lunch Program standards should be prohibited, returning control of students’ diets to their parents.

PROHIBIT FUNDING FOR AGRICULTURE MARKETING ORDERS

The federal government currently operates 28 marketing orders for different fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops. These agreements, which date back to the market intrusions of the New Deal, allow the government to collude with segments of certain industries to restrict the supply of food to consumers. The cartels created by the agreement

³⁷ Government Accountability Office, “Seafood Safety: Responsibility for Inspecting Catfish Should Not Be Assigned to USDA”, June 8, 2012. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-12-411>

are given tools such as volume controls and minimum quality standards, and packaging requirements.³⁸ Beginning in FY 2017, funds for agriculture marketing orders should be prohibited.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES:

ELIMINATE THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION (LSC)

Though created with the intent to provide free, legal assistance in non-criminal cases, the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) has evolved into an organization that also takes part in taxpayer-bankrolled advocacy for political causes and lobbying. The LSC is marked by misuse of taxpayer money and redundancy as many of LSC's programs are offered by the states. Beginning in FY 2017, the LSC should be eliminated, saving the taxpayers \$385 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is a duplicative program and provides subsidies in an area that is not the responsibility of the federal government. The EDA should be eliminated beginning in FY 2017, saving the taxpayers \$261 million per year. This proposal is based on H.R. 661, the EDA Elimination Act, introduced by Representative Mike Pompeo.

ELIMINATE THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION (ITA)

By the International Trade Administration's (ITA) own account, its activities provide "counseling to American companies in order to develop the most profitable and sustainable plans for pricing, export, and the full range of public and private trade promotion assistance, as well as market intelligence, and industry and market-specific research." U.S. companies produce products that can compete with those produced anywhere in the world. These successful companies do not need Uncle Sam pitching in to do market research (funded by taxpayer dollars and debt). Beginning in FY 2017, the ITA's marketing activities should be eliminated, saving \$393 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE (NTIS)

The National Technical Information Service (NTIS) is an outdated agency at the Department of Commerce that prints and sells government documents. Most of these documents are

³⁸ Daren Bakst, Heritage Foundation, "The Federal Government Should Stop Limiting the Sale of Certain Fruits and Vegetables", September 29, 2015. <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/09/the-federal-government-should-stop-limiting-the-sale-of-certain-fruits-and-vegetables>

available to the public for free online. This agency, which has 145 full time employees, should be eliminated beginning in FY 2017, saving \$170 million annually.

ELIMINATE THE HOLLINGS MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (MEP)

The Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), named after Democrat Senator Fritz Hollings, provides financial support to local centers that provide technical services to small manufacturing companies. Originally meant to be self-sustaining, the program is dependent on annual federal subsidies, which should be eliminated beginning in FY2017, saving \$130 million per year.

PROHIBIT RELINQUISHING CONTROL OF THE INTERNET

The Obama Administration has developed plans to give away the backbone of the Internet's infrastructure to the "global stakeholder community", which would include authoritarian regimes bent on censoring the Internet. While these plans have been temporarily thwarted by riders on appropriations bills, the current prohibition expires on October 1, 2016. Funds should be prohibited for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to relinquish its responsibility over the Internet's domain name system functions.

PROHIBIT FUNDING TO CARRY OUT OPERATION CHOKEPOINT

The Obama Administration has undertaken Operation Chokepoint through the Department of Justice and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to pressure banks into refusing financial services for legal businesses, such as firearms dealers, to which the administration is ideologically opposed. Funding for Operation Chokepoint should be prohibited.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES:

ELIMINATE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (EERE) PROGRAM

This program invests in research and development in the fields of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. Some of the programs within EERE include solar, wind, the Super Truck program, the Advanced Technology Vehicle Manufacturing Loan program, and solid state lighting research. Not only does this allow the federal government to pick winners and losers, but also it limits research to a small sector of the energy economy—renewables. The U.S. should pursue a market-based, all-of-the-above energy policy. Beginning in FY 2017, programs within the EERE account should be eliminated, saving the taxpayers over \$1.95 billion per year.

ELIMINATE THE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY – ENERGY (ARPA-E)

The Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy (ARPA-E) is agency was started by the failed 2009 stimulus law and is meant to fund high-risk green energy projects. Taxpayers should not bear the burden for research projects that not even the most speculative and daring members of the energy industry will take on for themselves. Eliminating ARPA-E beginning in FY2017 could save the taxpayers \$291 million per year.

ELIMINATE TITLE 17 INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY LOAN GUARANTEE PROGRAM

The Title 17 Innovative Technology Loan Guarantee program provides loans to clean energy projects. This is the program that gave us the Solyndra scandal, with taxpayers losing more than \$500 million after the administration gambled on a politically favored company. Eliminating this program beginning in FY 2017 would save the taxpayers \$17 million per year in reduced administrative expenses alone.

ELIMINATE THE FOSSIL ENERGY PROGRAM

Just as this proposal calls for the elimination of “green” energy subsidies, it also calls for the elimination of subsidies for conventional energy sources. Funding under the Fossil Energy program goes to research and development of technology to reduce the carbon emissions of coal power plants, which could help the administration implement its Clean Power Plan. Instead of government-directed subsidies, the U.S. should pursue a market-oriented “all of the above” energy strategy. Beginning in FY 2017, this account should be eliminated, saving taxpayers over \$632 million per year.

ELIMINATE REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

The RSC recommends cutting regional commissions including the Denali Commission, Appalachian Regional Commission, the Northern Border Regional Commission, the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, and the Delta Regional Authority. These economic development programs are duplicative of other programs in the federal government and spend federal funding for local projects. Not only is the federal government out of money, but also it is ill-equipped to adequately prioritize local infrastructure and development projects. These activities are also more appropriately carried out by state and local governments. Beginning in FY 2017 the commissions should be eliminated, saving the taxpayers \$190 million per year.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT:

ELIMINATE THE ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

The Election Assistance Commission was created by the 2002 Help America Vote Act to help states modernize voting equipment. The commission no longer serves a statutory purpose and should be eliminated beginning in FY 2017, saving taxpayers \$10 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE SEC SLUSH FUND

The Security and Exchange Commission's so-called "Reserve Fund" is simply a slush fund created by the Dodd-Frank financial regulations law, allowing regulators to spend without oversight by Congress. This fund should be eliminated.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES:

REDUCE FUNDING FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

The EPA is a job-killing agency that is out-of-control. The unelected bureaucrats at the agency are implementing their ideological agenda to remake the American economy by regulatory fiat. Whether it is the Clean Power Plan, the Waters of the U.S. rule, or ozone standards, these regulations impose costs on consumers, businesses, and local governments, resulting in fewer well-paying jobs in important sectors like energy production and manufacturing, without providing meaningful public benefit. Beginning in FY 2017, funding for the EPA should be significantly reduced, saving the taxpayers billions of dollars per year and giving much-needed regulatory relief to job creators.

ELIMINATE THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS AND THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

The federal government should not be in the business of funding the arts. Support for the arts can easily and more properly be found from non-governmental sources. Eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts would save taxpayers \$148 million per year and eliminating the National Endowment for the Humanities would save an additional \$148 million per year.

ELIMINATE DIESEL EMISSIONS REDUCTION ACT (DERA) GRANTS

Grants made under Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) have gone to wasteful projects involving cherry pickers, electrifying parking spaces at rest stops, and retrofitting old tractors. Beginning in FY 2017, DERA grants should be eliminated, saving \$10 million per year.

ELIMINATE SUBSIDIES FOR THE D.C. OPERA HOUSE

The John F. Kennedy Center, located along the Potomac River waterfront in Washington, D.C., first opened in 1971. According to its website, the Kennedy Center hosts “an unmatched variety of theater and musicals, dance and ballet, orchestral, chamber, jazz, popular, world, and folk music, and multimedia performances for all ages.” It is affiliated with the National Symphony Orchestra and the Washington National Opera. It receives tens of millions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies each year.

Tickets can often cost over \$150 apiece, and performances are often sold out. The Kennedy Center’s website currently lists 15 corporations as Executive Benefactors who provide annual commitment of \$250,000 or greater. It is clear that the center is more than capable of supporting itself.

It is inappropriate for the federal government to subsidize a performing arts center in one of the wealthiest areas in the country. Eliminating subsidies to the Kennedy Center beginning in FY 2017 would save taxpayers \$36.4 million per year.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES:

ELIMINATE FUNDING FOR THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING (CPB)

A free society should not have government-supported media outlets, especially ones that so often convey political news and opinion. There is no shortage of media outlets and news services available to consumers. Eliminating all taxpayer funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) beginning in FY 2017 would save \$445 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD (NLRB)

The Department of Justice (DOJ) already oversees a wide variety of civil, criminal, and administrative issues, including anti-trust and voting rights. DOJ is certainly capable of handling claims of unfair labor practices and could do so without the pro-union bias and partisanship endemic to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Eliminating the NLRB beginning in FY 2017 would save \$274 million per year, while in no way diminishing the effective implementation of federal labor laws.

ELIMINATE THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES (IMLS)

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) provides grants to local museums and libraries, a task that can be better ~~handled~~ by the private sector and local governments. Eliminating the IMLS would save \$230 million per year.

ELIMINATE TITLE X FAMILY PLANNING FUNDING

Title X, or the family planning federal grant program, provides abortion providers with federal funds to terminate pregnancies and end the lives of thousands of innocent babies. This money has been used by abortion providers like Planned Parenthood to not only underwrite the abortion industry, but has also been used in support of organizations that dismember and sell fetal body parts. Planned Parenthood is the largest recipient of Title X grants, which are intended to fund valuable health services for low-income women, but instead are used by these malicious abortion providers to put the safety of women and their unborn babies in danger.³⁹ Eliminating Title X would save \$287 million per year.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE BRANCH:

ELIMINATE OPEN WORLD LEADERSHIP CENTER

The Open World Leadership Center is meant to facilitate cultural and political exchanges between the U.S. Congress and leaders in post-Soviet countries. Eliminating the Center beginning in FY 2017, more than a quarter century after the end of the Cold War, would save taxpayers \$5.6 million per year.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES:

PROHIBIT BONUSES FOR SENIOR VA EMPLOYEES

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) is charged with one of the most important duties of the federal government—ensuring that the men and women who have served their country in uniform have the care and services they deserve. Under the Obama Administration, the VA has failed to fulfill its mission. Instead, the agency has been implicated in several costly scandals and egregious mismanagement, all of which have distracted from the agency's essential mission. To ensure that the VA is focused on serving veterans appropriately, this proposal recommends prohibiting bonuses for senior VA employees until reforms can be implemented.

³⁹ U.S. Congressman Diane Black, "Defund Planned Parenthood". <https://black.house.gov/issue/defunding-planned-parenthood>

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND RELATED PROGRAMS:

REDUCE FOREIGN AID

At a time when our gross national debt has topped \$19 trillion and we must rely on foreign countries to finance our debt, we cannot afford to be as generous to other nations as we have been in the past. Beginning in FY 2017, foreign assistance should be reduced.

REFORM THE BOARD OF BROADCASTING GOVERNORS

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) oversees all U.S. civilian international media, including the Voice of America (VOA). According to GAO and the State Department's Office of Inspector General, the agency suffers from managerial problems and other structural deficiencies.⁴⁰ These problems have inhibited the agency's effectiveness to promote the country's message across the globe. This proposal is based on H.R. 2323, the United States International Communications Reform Act of 2015, introduced by Representative Ed Royce.

ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS ACCOUNT

The International Organizations and Programs account provides voluntary contributions to international organizations, many of which do not represent American interests and values. Within this account, the U.N. Population Fund provides family planning and abortion funding abroad. Funds should also be withheld from the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as well as the U.N. Human Rights Council, which is comprised of member nations like Cuba, Venezuela, China, and Russia, all of which have abysmal records on human rights.

Eliminating these funds beginning in FY 2017 would save \$339 million per year.

ELIMINATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CLEAN TECHNOLOGY FUND

The Clean Technology Fund was created in 2010 by the Obama Administration to promote green energy abroad. Borrowing from foreign nations to spend millions promoting green energy is not a wise fiscal decision. Ending contributions to the fund beginning in FY 2017 would save over \$170.7 million per year.

⁴⁰ State Department's Office of Inspector General, "Audit of the Broadcasting Board of Governors Administration and Oversight of Acquisition Functions", June 2014.
<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/sites/republicans.foreignaffairs.house.gov/files/227877-reduced-file-size.pdf>

ELIMINATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STRATEGIC CLIMATE FUND

Created in 2010 by the Obama Administration, the Strategic Climate Fund is meant to address climate change abroad. Ending contributions to the fund beginning in FY 2017 would save \$60 million per year.

ELIMINATE COMPLEX CRISES FUND

The Complex Crises Fund was established in 2010 by the Obama Administration without authorization by Congress. The fund is meant to allow the State Department to “respond to unforeseen crises,” and is duplicative of other State Department funding. Eliminating the fund beginning in FY 2017 would save \$30 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION

The Inter-American Foundation provides assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean and is duplicative of other State Department and USAID activities. Eliminating the Foundation beginning in FY 2017 would save \$22.5 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE UNITED STATES AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

The U.S. African Development Foundation provides assistance to Africa and is duplicative of other State Department and USAID activities. Eliminating the foundation beginning in FY 2017 would save \$30 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE EAST-WEST CENTER

The East-West Center promotes relationships between the U.S., Pacific, and Asian countries. Eliminating the Center beginning in FY 2017 would save \$17 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE ASIA FOUNDATION

The Asia Foundation provides assistance to Asia and is duplicative of other State Department and USAID activities. Eliminating the Foundation beginning in FY 2017 would save \$17 million per year.

ELIMINATE THE CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN-WESTERN DIALOGUE

The Center for Middle Eastern-Western Dialogue, more commonly called the Hollings Center, is meant to foster dialogue between the U.S. and predominately Muslim countries. Eliminating the center beginning in FY 2017 would save \$96,000 per year.

ELIMINATE FUNDING FOR THE U.S. INSTITUTE OF PEACE

The U.S. Institute of Peace was established by Congress in 1984 to promote peace and conflict resolution. In 2011, the institute moved into a new, elaborately designed, \$180 million headquarters, of which \$100 million was allocated by Congress. Eliminating funding for the Institute of Peace would save \$35.3 million per year.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES:

ELIMINATE FUNDING FOR THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY (WMATA)

The federal government should not be directly subsidizing the public transit system of one of the most affluent metropolitan areas in the U.S. Eliminating the subsidy for the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) beginning in FY 2017 would save the nation's taxpayers \$150 million per year.

ELIMINATE AMTRAK OPERATING GRANTS AND CAPITAL GRANTS

The federal government has subsidized the National Railroad Passenger Corporation - better known as Amtrak - since it was created by Congress in 1970. The railroad service is a notoriously poor fiscal manager, losing \$72 million on food and beverage service alone in 2012. But Amtrak has no incentive to improve its performance if it is able to count on the taxpayers for a bailout each year. The federal government should not force taxpayers to subsidize Amtrak, which should be privatized. Eliminating Amtrak Operating grants beginning in FY 2017 would save \$289 million per year, while eliminating Amtrak Capital grants beginning in FY 2017 would save \$1.1 billion per year.

PROHIBIT HIGH-SPEED RAIL FUNDING

The failed 2009 stimulus spending bill provided \$8 billion for high-speed rail projects. To be clear, there was no demand for these big-government projects and high-speed rail often costs significantly more than other forms of transportation. Thankfully, the governors of Florida, Ohio, and Wisconsin rejected funds for high-speed rail projects so the residents of their states would not get stuck with the bill. The high-speed rail boondoggle shows why the states, local governments, and the market should take a leading role in determining where transportation dollars get spent, not bureaucrats in Washington.

ELIMINATE THE NEW STARTS TRANSIT PROGRAM

The New Starts Program, sometimes called Capital Investment Grants, provides billions in subsidies to local transit for capital improvements to fixed-guideway projects, including streetcars, subways, and dedicated bus lanes. Often these projects are inefficient and fail to reduce congestion. Because this program subsidizes new projects, it incentivizes transit agencies to build expensive projects without regard to cost, putting taxpayers on the hook for operating costs down the road and diverting funds from existing roads and other infrastructure. Eliminating New Starts beginning in FY 2017 would save taxpayers \$2.2 billion per year.

ELIMINATE TIGER GRANTS

TIGER Grants, also called the National Infrastructure Investment Program, were created by the president's failed Stimulus law. The program is particularly problematic because projects are selected by the administration, often for political purposes (Democrat districts have received 69 percent of funding), and go towards projects that would be more appropriately funded by state or local governments.⁴¹ GAO has found problems with the funding decisions made by the administration under this program.⁴² The TIGER program is a remarkably poor investment, and Congress chose not to reauthorize it in the highway bill signed into law by President Obama in 2015. Ending appropriations for TIGER Grants beginning in FY 2017 would save taxpayers \$500 million each year.

REDUCE FUNDING FOR THE HUD OFFICE OF HOUSING

The Office of Housing regulates the housing industry, a task that is better left to state and local governments, who already administer the vast majority of housing assistance programs in the U.S. Beginning in FY 2017, funding for the Office of Housing should be reduced.

REDUCE FUNDING FOR THE PUBLIC HOUSING CAPITAL AND OPERATING FUNDS

The Public Housing Capital Fund and the Public Housing Operating Fund provide federal funding for public housing projects, a task that is better left to state and local governments. Beginning in FY 2017, the funding Public Housing Capital and Operating Funds should be reduced.

⁴¹ Baruch Feigenbaum, Reason Foundation, "Eliminate TIGER Program", February 17, 2015. <http://reason.org/news/show/eliminate-tiger-program>

⁴² Government Accountability Office, "Surface Transportation: Actions Needed to Improve Documentation of Key Decisions in the TIGER Discretionary Grant Program", May 28, 2014. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-14-628R>

ELIMINATE FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG) AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LOAN GUARANTEES (CDLG)

This program has been unauthorized (yet still funded) for decades and is a prime example of the federal government's difficulty prioritizing local programs. CDBG has paid for programs as diverse as doggie daycare, a local circus, and decorative sidewalks in an affluent suburb. Beginning in FY 2017, CDBG and CDLG funding should be eliminated.

WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF MULTIPLE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES:

PROHIBIT FEDERAL FUNDS FROM GOING TO ENTITIES THAT PROVIDE ABORTIONS

The federal government should not fund entities that provide abortion services. This proposal ensures that no taxpayer dollars flow to entities that provide abortions.

PROHIBIT SUBSIDIES FOR SANCTUARY CITIES

There are over 300 so-called sanctuary cities across the country, which fail to fulfil their obligation to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement officials and report criminal aliens. Federal funding, such as grants from the Department of Justice and Homeland Security, should be prohibited for these jurisdictions.

REDUCE THE ANNUAL ACROSS-THE-BOARD ADJUSTMENT FOR FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES PAY

Unlike most Americans, federal workers receive an automatic pay increase every year under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990. If the president determines that a national emergency exists, he can limit the size of the increase. President Obama signed legislation blocking pay increases in 2011, 2012, and 2013. However, with the national debt topping \$19 trillion, and projected to skyrocket to almost \$30 trillion over the next decade, a fiscal state of emergency exists whether the current administration is willing to admit it or not. Beginning in FY 2017, the annual across-the-board increase for federal workers should be reduced by half a percentage point below the expected automatic increases.

REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE THROUGH ATTRITION

This proposal, based on Representative Cynthia Lummis's H.R. 417, the Federal Workforce Reduction Through Attrition Act, would reduce the size of the federal workforce by limiting new hires to one employee for every three who leaves the workforce. The president would have flexibility to adjust federal employment in case of a national emergency.

PROHIBIT FEDERAL EMPLOYEES FROM CONDUCTING UNION BUSINESS ON OFFICIAL TIME

In 2012, taxpayers paid federal workers over \$157 million *not* to do their jobs. Instead, workers were doing union work during their official time.⁴³ Ending the federal government’s sanction of union activity at federal expense, as proposed by Representative Jodi Hice’s H.R. 1658, the Federal Employee Accountability Act, will make the federal workforce more effective and efficient.

PROHIBIT AUTOMATIC COLLECTION OF UNION DUES FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEE UNIONS

Currently, the federal government acts as the dues collector for unionized federal workers by deducting union dues from an employee’s paycheck and then remitting dues to the union.

If a worker wants to join a union, then the union should collect its dues from the worker, not force the taxpayers to do it. This proposal recommends prohibiting the automatic deduction of union dues for federal workers.

LIMIT FUNDING FOR UNAUTHORIZED PROGRAMS

Approximately \$310 billion of the \$1 trillion appropriated for FY 2016 in the Consolidated Appropriations Act were for programs whose authorizations had expired. Beginning in FY 2017, funding for unauthorized programs should be limited, so Congress is encouraged to reauthorize and reform worthy programs, while eliminating failing programs.

ELIMINATE, COMBINE, OR CONSOLIDATE DUPLICATIVE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

GAO issues periodic reports that expose duplicative federal programs, and there are countless additional examples of duplication and waste documented by Members of Congress, the media, and government watchdog groups.

The committees of the House should examine the programs within their jurisdiction and to report legislation that would eliminate, consolidate, or combine unnecessarily duplicative programs.

⁴³ Office of Personnel Management, “Labor-Management Relations in the Executive Branch”, October 2014. <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/labor-management-relations/reports/labor-management-relations-in-the-executive-branch-2014.pdf>