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Dear Representative:

We strongly oppose proposed legislation that would weaken the Congressional Budget Office (“CBO”). Congress created CBO in 1974 to bolster its ability to check an overreaching executive branch. It is a nonpartisan legislative branch agency with an apolitical, expert staff that assists Congress with analyzing federal spending and developing annual budgets.

The three amendments offered to the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill contained in H.R. 3219 would make it impossible for CBO to continue to execute one of its core duties. These amendments would eliminate CBO’s Budget Analysis Division and reduce the agency’s staff by at least one third.¹

CBO’s Budget Analysis Division is at the heart of congressional oversight of federal spending. It produces baseline projections of federal spending, formal cost estimates for nearly every bill approved by congressional committees, and informal cost estimates for thousands of proposals that committees are considering.² It also works on the annual analysis of the President’s Budget, scorekeeping for enacted legislation, and assists with the annual compilation of unauthorized appropriations and expiring authorizations.

CBO is not perfect, but it is essential to Congress’ ability to keep an eye on the public purse and play a significant role in budgeting. Reducing the number of experts that advise Congress will further diminish its ability to govern. We urge the House to reject these proposals, and instead convene hearings to examine ways to improve CBO’s operations and assistance to Congress.

For more information, please contact Kevin Kosar, vice president for policy, the R Street Institute, at kkosar@rstreet.org, or Daniel Schuman, policy director, Demand Progress, at daniel@demandprogress.org.

¹ See proposed amendments 19, 21, and 26 to H.R. 3219 (115th Congress), available at <https://rules.house.gov/bill/115/hr-3219>. Amendment 19 eliminates CBO’s Budget Analysis Division, fires 89 staff, and cuts \$15 million from CBO’s \$48.5 million budget (<http://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/GRIFVA042724170930123012.pdf>). Amendment 21 eliminates CBO’s Budget Analysis Division, fires 89 staff, cuts \$15 million from CBO’s \$48.5 million budget, and charges CBO with gathering scoring data from the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Brookings Institution, and the Urban Institute ([http://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/MEADOW_059_xml%20\(3\)724170941554155.pdf](http://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/MEADOW_059_xml%20(3)724170941554155.pdf)). Amendment 26 cuts \$25.436 million from CBO’s \$48.5 million budget (http://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/PERRY_070_xml724170926462646.pdf).

² <https://www.cbo.gov/about/organization-and-staffing>