August 8, 2017

An Open Letter to the United States Senate:
Support S. 1746

Dear Senators,

We the undersigned organizations urge you to support Sen. Mike Lee's bill S.1746, CBO Show Your Work Act of 2017, which requires the Congressional Budget Office to make publicly available the models, data and other details of computations it uses in cost analysis and scoring.

Currently, the CBO publishes insufficient information on its mathematical models to empower Congress and the American people to understand how the agency arrives at its conclusions or to enable independent researchers to reproduce the results. Unfortunately, this has harmed CBO's credibility in the eyes of some.

We believe CBO's work should not be a political football. It should be a strong, independent agency that is respected by all parties and sufficiently funded to meet its duty to empower Congress to serve as a check on the executive branch. To meet these obligations, we must have clarity on its methodology so as to place its work beyond reproach.

Under Sen. Lee's proposal, the CBO would make publicly available each fiscal model, policy model and data-preparation routine used to estimate the costs and other fiscal, social or economic effects of legislation. This information will give Congress and the American people a better understanding of how the CBO arrives at its conclusions and offer independent researchers the opportunity to replicate the results. This small but significant change will place CBO's work on surer footing.

The CBO plays a vital role in our legislative process. Its central mission is to provide Congress and the American people with an unvarnished, expert assessment of how potential legislation will affect the nation's budget. The Congressional Budget Office's analysis can have a real impact on whether a piece of legislation is enacted into law. Because of this influence, it is imperative that the office show how it produces assessments. Greater transparency into CBO's methodology will increase faith in its analysis and understanding of how it reaches its conclusions. Sen. Lee's legislation will help make this happen.

Sincerely,

R Street Institute
American Society of News Editors
Associated Press Media Editors
Association of Alternative NewsMedia
Campaign for Liberty
Coalition to Reduce Spending
Defense Priorities Initiative
Demand Progress

FreedomWorks
GovTrack.us
Heritage Action
National Taxpayers Union
Niskanen Center
Taxpayers Protection Alliance
TechFreedom