



October 7, 2009

To: Members of the U.S. Senate
RE: Sen. Bunning's 72-Hour Transparency Resolution

Dear Members of the U.S. Senate,

We write to urge you to co-sponsor and otherwise support Sen. Jim Bunning's (R-Ky.) 72-Hour Transparency Resolution. Sen. Bunning's resolution would require that no committee or subcommittee may consider any legislative matter unless the legislative matter and a *final* budget scoring by the Congressional Budget Office for the legislative matter has been posted on the Internet in a searchable form for 72 hours (excluding weekends and holidays). The same rule would apply for the Senate floor. It would take a supermajority to overturn these rules.

Taxpayers, who ultimately pick up the tab for every bill Congress passes, deserve greater accountability than they have recently been provided with: The "stimulus" package passed without anyone who voted for it having even read it. The "cap-and-trade" bill was not even fully assembled when a final vote was taken. These bills were both crafted in secret, with the "cap-and-trade" bill receiving a 300-page amendment in the dead of the night before the vote. This rushed and abrogated legislative process cheats the American people who entrust their representatives will offer thoughtful and comprehensive debate on legislation before it is passed.

But these two bills are just two examples, many bills passed through Congress carry a massive price tag the actual scope of which cannot fully be determined until the legislative language is made available to the CBO, and then it would take another few days for the CBO to put together the score. CBO director Elmendorf himself pointed out in the context of the deliberations of Sen. Bunning's amendment to the healthcare bill in committee:

A formal cost estimate would require, we have said this to people on the House and Senate side, would really require two weeks of work by us, once a package is settled. And that may seem like a long time, but it - there are a lot of complications in doing this right, as you need it to be done and it is the interaction effects among the provisions, it is reading the legislative language.

Given the impact federal legislation has on all American taxpayers, a preliminary score simply is not good enough, and Congress should take its time to weigh all its decisions carefully, while seeking more input from the public, who should be given the opportunity to partake in political discourse.

Taxpayers feel this way, too: A recent Rasmussen poll shows that 83 percent of Americans want bills posted online in final form before Congress votes on them. Of this, 64 percent favor a two-week period, not just 72-hours.

Unless you have already done so, we hope that you will co-sponsor and otherwise support Sen. Bunning's resolution for the sake of American taxpayers who will no longer stand for a rushed and opaque legislative process.

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