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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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August 5, 2024

Dr. Phillip Swagel
Director
Congressional Budget Office
H2-402 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6925

Dear Director Swagel,

I have been following with interest the public discussion of the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) work on immigration, including their analysis of immigration's effects on employment and productivity as presented in this year's updated Budget and Economic Outlook, and CBO's new report -- Effects of the Immigration Surge on the Federal Budget and the Economy. CBO's report, in line with other recent budgetary projections, found that recent immigrants are projected to lower the deficit by nearly 1 trillion dollars over the next 10 years and add 1.2 trillion dollars in revenue over that same time period. The report also found that because of recently arrived immigrants, our GDP will increase by 8.9 trillion dollars between 2024 and 2034. I would like to request a meeting with you to discuss the potential impact on scoring this new work can have for future legislation, and the challenges CBO faces when scoring legislation.

I deeply respect CBO's work. Non-partisan, objective analysis is valuable across the board, but is particularly important on issues like immigration where partisan rhetoric and incorrect assertions tend to be common.

CBO's work on immigration has injected a much-needed set of facts and rigorous analysis showing the positive contribution of immigrants into both the conversations in Congress and in the public debate. Reading CBO's very detailed recent report, it is clear that you and your staff have invested a significant amount of time in this work. However, I am concerned that in the past, CBO has scored legislation in such a way that it is being used as a crutch, or an excuse, for certain members of Congress to not engage in a serious, fact-based conversation about how changes to immigration-related legislation would affect the federal budget and the US economy.

That is why I was pleased to see CBO's recent work on immigration. From examining the report, it appears the public and Congress would benefit from CBO consistently applying a scoring approach that captures all the contributions of immigrants as a default for immigration legislation. This type of scoring, which was done by CBO for H.R. 2131, the SKILLS Visa Act, and S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, in

the 113th Congress and S. 2611, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006, in the 109th Congress, includes all of the factors that would be included in conventional cost estimates as well as all of the direct budgetary effects of changing the number of people in the United States—in particular, the effects on taxable compensation and therefore on income and payroll tax revenues. As such, this type of scoring shows the true impact of immigration legislation on the country and economy.

To that end I would like to discuss the following with you:

1. What constraints CBO faces in not reporting these types of estimates to Congress on specific immigration legislative proposals, and who would need to be involved in a conversation about potentially changing the default of what information CBO reports to Congress in such cases;
2. Who can request CBO conduct a this more comprehensive estimate scoring approach for legislation and amendments; and
3. What specific factors are included in these comprehensive estimates.

Thank you again for your work on this matter and I look forward to discussing it with you in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pramila Jayapal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pramila" being more prominent than the last name "Jayapal".

Ranking Member
Immigration Integrity, Security, and
Enforcement
House Committee on the Judiciary