

March 14, 2016

Dear Member of Congress:

I urge you to co-sponsor and support the “Unauthorized Spending Accountability” (USA) Act, introduced by Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.)

This important legislation implements several reforms designed to restore Congressional authority over the power of the purse by ensuring all programs are properly authorized. ATR supports this bill and urges all members to support and co-sponsor the USA Act.

At present, unauthorized federal programs make up \$310 billion, or nearly 30 percent of the government’s discretionary budget. This includes important programs like the State Department, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. For years, Congress has ceded its authority to fund these programs and they are rolled over each year with little scrutiny or oversight.

The USA Act fixes this problem by implementing several reforms.

First, this legislation subjects all existing unauthorized programs to a three-year sunset schedule. In year one, programs receive just 90 percent of funding and in years two and three, programs receive 85 percent before sun setting after year three. This gives lawmakers a chance to reauthorize important programs before they sunset.

Second, the USA Act establishes the “Spending Accountability Commission” (SAC), to establish authorization schedules for all discretionary programs, conduct rigorous oversight over discretionary spending, and suggest areas to cut.

To ensure Congress does not resume bad habits, the commission is required to establish a three year reauthorization schedule for federal programs funded by discretionary spending.

For too long, Congress has shied away from exerting its power of the purse when it comes to many spending programs. By overhauling Congressional authority over the power of the purse, Rep. McMorris Rodgers’ legislation will ensure lawmakers exert appropriate scrutiny over hundreds of billions in unauthorized spending.

ATR supports this important legislation and encourages all members of Congress to support and co-sponsor the USA Act.

Onward,



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