

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Hoyer, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

As we continue bipartisan, bicameral efforts to enact another much-needed COVID-19 relief package, we respectfully ask that you include within this package specific measures designed to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

Never before in our history has Congress spent so much money so quickly as we have in response to COVID-19. Unprecedented spending, while necessary, creates an unprecedented opportunity for funds to be misused and other forms of mischief. Although the Administration has taken limited steps to increase transparency and accountability, it is incumbent upon Congress to further strengthen oversight.

Here are four steps that members of the Blue Dog Coalition propose Congress take to protect taxpayer dollars:

1. **Stop Sending Checks to Dead People:** According to the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office (GAO), as of April 30, the Trump Administration has made nearly 1.1 million economic impact payments to deceased individuals, totaling almost \$1.4 billion. This is unacceptable. Congress should fix the problem by including the *Stopping Improper Payments to Deceased People Act* in the next COVID-19 relief bill. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would, among other things, require federal agencies to make appropriate use of death data in order to curb improper payments to people who are no longer living.
2. **Protect Inspectors General and Federal Whistleblowers:** The best way for Congress to track and prevent COVID-19-related abuses is to strengthen the inspectors general (IGs) within each federal agency. To that end, Congress should take up the Blue Dog Coalition-endorsed

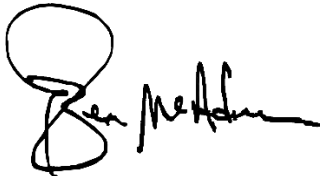
Inspectors General Independence Act, which would depoliticize IGs by giving them seven-year terms and protect them from partisan firing without cause. Congress should also prohibit retaliation against federal employees who file whistleblower complaints related to the use of coronavirus response funds.

3. **Show Taxpayers Where Their Hard-Earned Money Goes:** Sunshine is the best disinfectant when it comes to combating waste, fraud, and abuse. Congress should codify the bipartisan *Taxpayers Right-To-Know Act*, which requires federal agencies to report on their federal program activities and provide that information to the Office of Management and Budget to be published online.
4. **Shine a Light on the Fed's Actions:** Congress should narrow exemptions from certain transparency measures that have been afforded to the Federal Reserve. Specifically, Congress should require the Fed to keep records of meetings pertaining to the COVID-19 response and to make those records available to the public even if the Fed Chair determines the meetings were conducted under "unusual and exigent circumstances." Given that the Fed has authorized nearly \$6 trillion in economic support in response to the pandemic, the American people deserve to know how the Fed plans to use that money, and the full rationale and deliberations behind its decisions.

During this pandemic, every federal dollar wasted is a dollar less to support our health care system, our workers, and our businesses. Protecting taxpayer money should be the ultimate bipartisan cause, and the American people are counting on us to get this right.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



REP. BEN MCADAMS (UT-04)
Co-Chair, Task Force on Fiscal Responsibility
& Government Reform
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. ED CASE (HI-01)
Co-Chair, Task Force on Fiscal Responsibility
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REP. STEPHANIE MURPHY (FL-07)
Co-Chair for Administration
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. TOM O'HALLERAN (AZ-01)
Co-Chair for Policy
Blue Dog Coalition



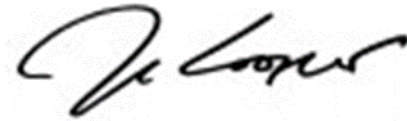
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Co-Chair for Communications
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Co-Chair for Whip
Blue Dog Coalition



REP. KURT SCHRADER (OR-05)
Co-Chair
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REP. JIM COOPER (TN-05)
Member
Blue Dog Coalition




REP. ABIGAIL SPANBERGER (VA-07)
Member
Blue Dog Coalition



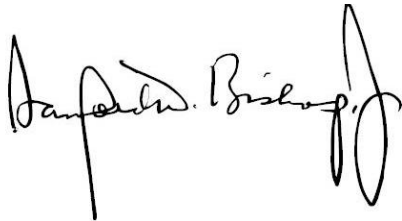
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