



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

May 8, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey:

On May 1, 2019, the Legislative Branch Subcommittee considered the fiscal year (FY) 2020 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. We are strongly opposed to the budgetary framework that underlies this and other appropriations bills being considered by the Appropriations Committee. In advance of Full Committee consideration of this bill, I would like to take this opportunity to share both these overall concerns as well as specific concerns related to this bill.

The Legislative Branch Appropriations bill is one of the first bills being considered under House Democrats' budget framework, which would raise the discretionary spending caps by more than \$350 billion in FYs 2020 and 2021 and does not reflect a House-passed budget resolution or a bipartisan, bicameral agreement. This would put the Federal Government on track to add nearly \$2 trillion to deficits over 10 years, while the national debt is already above \$22 trillion and rising.

In addition, the House Democrats' framework continues the misguided notion that increases to defense spending must be matched or exceeded by increases to non-defense spending. The bills under consideration actually provide twice as much additional funding in FY 2020 for non-defense programs than for defense programs, relative to FY 2019 levels. Investing in our national security remains a key Administration priority, but ensuring our defense does not require additional non-defense discretionary funding.

Excessive deficits continue to threaten the Nation's progress, and without action to restore the proper size and role of Government, deficits will remain over a trillion dollars per year for the foreseeable future. The President's FY 2020 Budget provides the Congress with a clear roadmap for bringing Federal spending under control. It proposes more spending reductions than any other administration has proposed in history, while providing necessary funding for defense, national security, and other critical needs. Importantly, the Budget protects these key priorities while adhering to the discretionary spending caps in current law. The Congress must do the same.

Overall, according to information provided in the Subcommittee press release, the House Subcommittee bill proposes \$3.9 billion, which is \$135 million, or 3.6 percent, higher than the FY 2019 enacted level. The Administration encourages the Legislative Branch to maintain fiscal discipline along with the rest of the Federal Government.

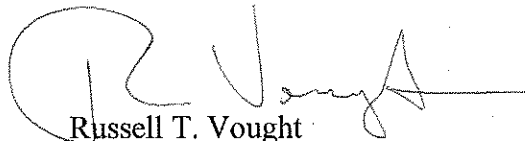
In particular, the Administration urges the Congress to reconsider the following notable increases over the already excessive FY 2019 enacted levels:

- The subcommittee mark includes an additional \$94 million for House Salaries and Expenses, the highest percent and dollar increase within the entire bill. Moreover, the Administration finds it particularly problematic that the House leadership budget has increased 25 percent in two short years.
- The subcommittee once again provides additional funding for GAO, bringing it to an all-time high funding level of \$616 million or \$71 million more than in 2017.

Finally, the Administration notes that this legislation would purport to give the Congress the authority to hire Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients. The Administration remains committed to working with the Congress to provide a legislative solution for DACA recipients, but it believes the memorandum issued by the Obama Administration that is cited in this provision was illegal and for that reason has sought to rescind that policy.

As the Committee takes up the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee bill, the Administration looks forward to working with you to address these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Vought", written over a circular stamp or mark.

Russell T. Vought
Acting Director

cc: The Honorable Tim Ryan
The Honorable Jamie Herrera Beutler

Identical Letter Sent to The Honorable Kay Granger