



U.S. House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

With the budget deficit approaching \$2 trillion this year and growing debt projected for the next decade, any genuine effort to address our severe and growing budget problems is welcome. However, I was troubled to learn of the Leadership's plan to take pay-as-you-go legislation directly to the floor, bypassing the committee of jurisdiction, the Committee on the Budget. Because this step severely threatens both the quality and credibility of this proposal, I urge you to reconsider, and restore the regular order for this bill; and I do so for the following reasons:

First, Chairman Spratt is the most knowledgeable and experienced member on budget matters in the House, who skillfully and fairly leads the House Budget Committee. Taking this legislation from his committee would deny members the opportunity to participate in the drafting of this complex revision and extension of the pay-as-you-go law that the Administration has proposed.

Second, this would break the precedent of the Committee writing budget process legislation. When Republicans held the Majority, the *Comprehensive Budget Process Reform Act of 1999*, the *Spending Control Act of 2004*, and the *Legislative Line Item Veto Act of 2006* were marked up in Committee, ensuring members on both sides could fully debate the bill and offer amendments. Bypassing the Committee for the pay-as-you-go proposal sets a troubling precedent for rushing through future budget process changes without the proper review by Congress.

Third, distribution of authority among Congress' committees is one of the vital safeguards against the concentration of power that is always hazardous, regardless of political philosophy. The House has seen an increasing and disturbing trend of rushing legislation straight to the floor, increasingly under limited rules for amendments. Serious deliberation in a transparent manner is the lifeblood of our legislative process; denying it diminishes a great strength of our democratic form of government. We are lawmakers and this trend diminishes our ability to fashion laws.

For these reasons, I urge you to maintain the regular order and let this bill be marked up by the Committee on the Budget.

Sincerely,

Paul Ryan
Ranking Member

Cc: The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
The Honorable John A. Boehner
Members of the Committee on the Budget