



# U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Washington, DC 20515

April 7, 2020

The Honorable Russell Vought  
Acting Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Vought:

As you know, our nation is facing one of the gravest health and economic emergencies in more than 100 years. The coronavirus pandemic has seriously impacted every aspect of American life. Since the beginning of the epidemic, Congress has worked in a bipartisan way to ensure our nation's response prioritizes the health and needs of the American people. To that end, Congress has passed, and the President has signed into law, three pieces of legislation that, together, dramatically expand, strengthen, and protect critical tools and relief operations for our families and our communities.

The most recent bill, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, is the single largest relief package ever passed by the United States government, representing \$2.2 trillion in new aid. I cannot stress enough the unparalleled importance of this assistance: strengthened Unemployment Insurance; direct payments to support Americans and their families; fast relief for small businesses through bolstered SBA emergency grants and loans; and critical investments in our hospitals, health systems, and state and local governments to ensure they have what they need to combat the virus and save lives. Implementing these bipartisan, whole-of-government initiatives as Congress intended is critical to ensuring that our government delivers the targeted and effective relief this crisis demands. But that is not solely a responsibility of the administration. Congress must fulfill our constitutional responsibility to oversee spending and ensure accountability as well, and we intend to do so.

During the House Budget Committee's hearing on February 12, 2020 regarding the President's budget request, you acknowledged that OMB may not substitute its judgment for the judgment of the Congress and must operate within the statutes that Congress provides. As Acting Director, you assured the committee that, under your leadership, OMB will be transparent regarding how it manages the people's money. I accepted your answer and your representation, and I promised to hold you to it. Now, when so much depends on the effectiveness of the federal government, it is critical that you uphold your commitment to maintaining the rule of law, respecting Congress' proper role, and promoting transparency between the branches.

The American people are counting on the relief Congress appropriated in the CARES Act, and it is vital that the aid included in this bill – and any bills to come – is provided in accordance with Congressional statutes and in a transparent way that allows Congress to uphold its constitutional responsibilities.

I, therefore, ask that you respond to the House Budget Committee in writing by April 30, 2020 detailing how OMB plans to:

- carry out its responsibilities in a manner that ensures that the executive branch's judgment is not substituted for the judgment of the Congress;
- ensure the executive branch faithfully implements the CARES Act, and other enacted coronavirus-related measures, and allocates funding and resources in accordance with the law and as needed based on science and facts;
- keep Congress fully informed of the status of spending on an ongoing basis and ensure that Congress receives the information and materials it requests; and
- comply with the oversight and accountability measures included in the bipartisan CARES Act.

I look forward to your responses and thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



John A. Yarmuth  
Chairman