

118th CONGRESS
1st Session

A BILL

To require that federal budget proposals and appropriations be transparent, accessible, and subject to direct constituent input before enactment, and to prohibit hidden earmarks and donor-driven carve-outs.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Constituent First Budget Act.”

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

- (a) “Budget proposal” means any submission of spending or revenue measures by the President, Congress, or an agency.
- (b) “Constituent input period” means a minimum 30-day public comment and feedback window prior to final committee action.
- (c) “Line-item dashboard” means a publicly accessible, digital platform displaying each proposed expenditure, its sponsor, and funding source.

SEC. 3. PUBLIC DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS.

- (a) All budget proposals shall be published on a public dashboard within 48 hours of introduction.
- (b) Each line item shall include: sponsor name, purpose, funding amount, statutory authority, and beneficiary entity.
- (c) No committee may advance a budget measure until the constituent input period has elapsed.

SEC. 4. CONSTITUENT INPUT.

- (a) Citizens shall have the right to submit comments, rankings, and alternative proposals through the public dashboard.
- (b) Committees must publish a written response to the top 10% of constituent submissions by volume or support.
- (c) All responses shall be archived and searchable.

SEC. 5. PROHIBITION ON HIDDEN EARMARKS.

- (a) No appropriation may be enacted unless the beneficiary entity is disclosed on the public dashboard.
- (b) Any undisclosed earmark shall be void and unenforceable.
- (c) Members of Congress who knowingly sponsor undisclosed earmarks shall be subject to censure and referral to the Office of Congressional Ethics.

SEC. 6. TRANSPARENCY IN SUBAWARDS.

- (a) All federal grants and contracts must disclose subawards within 30 days of issuance, published on the dashboard.
- (b) Agencies failing to report subawards shall forfeit 1% of their administrative budget to the Treasury.

SEC. 7. ENFORCEMENT.

- (a) The Government Accountability Office (GAO) shall audit compliance annually and publish results.

(b) Citizens may bring suit in federal court to compel compliance; prevailing parties recover attorney's fees.

(c) Any budget enacted without compliance shall be subject to injunction until corrected.

SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit Congress's constitutional power of the purse; this Act governs the process by which budget decisions are disclosed and subjected to constituent input.

SEC. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect beginning with the next fiscal year following enactment.