



April 11, 2011

**An Open Letter to the United States Congress:
Support Legislation to Apply Unobligated Funds to Deficit Reduction**

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the 362,000 members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I urge you to support legislative efforts that would require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to rescind money from certain unobligated balances of discretionary appropriations. The “Decrease Spending Now Act,” introduced as H.R. 1111 by Representative Price (R-GA) and as S. 726 by Senator Rubio (R-FL), is commonsense legislation that allows us to apply unused taxpayer dollars to pay down our deficit.

Nearly every federal department ends each year with billions of dollars in unobligated funding. This is money that Congress has appropriated to agencies but has gone unspent, often for years at a time. A recent report by the OMB found \$703 billion in unobligated federal money gathering dust in department coffers waiting to be spent. Research conducted by Senator Tom Coburn’s office estimates that more than \$82 billion of these funds are between six and 20 years old.

Needless to say, at a time of record deficits, the very existence of a glorified “slush fund” amounting to \$703 billion is simply unacceptable. Despite the enormous unspent balances, year-after-year Congress has borrowed billions more dollars to increase funding levels for programs. It is a sad indictment of Washington’s budgeting habits that Congress has been appropriating money far faster than even our voracious bureaucracy can spend it. At a time when many families are watching every penny of their own finances, such gross mismanagement of taxpayer dollars must stop.

Both parties are now locked in heated debate over the size and substance of reductions in government expenditures. Even the modest cuts being proposed, which make a nearly imperceptible dent in the budget deficit, are being unjustly impugned as harmful to core government functions. Even at this decisive moment in politics, Washington should be able to agree that using unspent federal funds for deficit reduction is far wiser than forcing taxpayers to pay for unneeded departmental funding increases or continuing to add to our \$14 trillion debt. It is therefore encouraging that 81 Senators, including 34 Democrats, are already on record as having supported a similar proposal as part of S. 223, the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization bill. Accordingly, we hope your colleagues maintain their backing of this commonsense legislation and make passage of these proposals a priority.

Sincerely,

Brandon Greife
Federal Government Affairs Manager