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October 7, 2011

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
United States Senate
Russell Senate Office Building, SR-326
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sessions:

Thank you for introducing the Honest Budget Act. Your bill would go far towards eliminating a number of budget process abuses that the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget has often highlighted. Process reform is no panacea, but can be an important piece of the solution.

The common sense proposals in HBA would help bring about a more responsible budget process through common sense reforms which target several budget gimmicks. The reforms in your bill will help bring more transparency, accountability, and honesty to the budget process. This legislation would improve the budget process by strengthening the requirement that Congress pass a budget resolution before considering appropriations bills. It would eliminate several sources of phony savings that are routinely used to "offset" spending. Also, strengthening the budgetary process for paying for emergencies, addressing timing gimmicks, and improving the scoring of the costs of loan guarantee programs is a substantial improvement to the current process.

By targeting many of the budget gimmicks that have contributed to the debt burden that we face, your proposal would be a positive step in countering the cynicism regarding the budget process. As you well know, the federal budget is slowly drowning in a rising tide of red ink. Your legislation would help prevent the problem from worsening. Unfortunately this legacy will be with us for a while.

Thank you for your leadership on this unheralded but important effort to restore some fiscal rectitude to our budget process.

Best,

Maya MacGuineas