NTU urges all Representatives to vote “YES” on H.R. 2485, the Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act, and S. 272, the Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act. Each piece of legislation would apply some common-sense public transparency measures to a complex and often opaque network of federal agency reports and budget requests. As lawmakers consider broader budget process reforms and additional measures to rein in record deficits and debt, these bipartisan bills would enable Congress to exercise more effective oversight of federal spending.

H.R. 2485, the Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act from Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL), would ensure that the general public can ‘one-stop shop’ for all federal agency reports that are mandated by and submitted to federal lawmakers. Congressionally mandated reports are a key oversight tool for Congress, American taxpayers, and watchdog groups like NTU -- especially as many federal agencies grow in size and scope. Too often, these reports are difficult to find, access, or analyze, even if federal agencies check the box of sending a mandated report to individual Congressional offices or committees. The Access to Congressionally Mandated Reports Act would create one public website to access all reports, along with the ability for members of the public to search the full text of reports by keyword and to download any or all reports. For years, this legislation has had strong bipartisan support, and rightly so. We urge all lawmakers to support this bill and for the Senate to advance it to the President’s desk.

S. 272, the Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act from Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI), would similarly require the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to make all federal agency budget requests to Congress publicly available in a single place. These requirements will not only aid Congress in conducting its constitutional authorities over the nation’s purse strings, but will help members of the public better understand and analyze how federal agencies are proposing to spend taxpayer dollars from year to year. Additionally, the Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act would require the Secretary of the Treasury to post, at least monthly, updated information on spending for all appropriations accounts -- including expired or expiring appropriations accounts. This common-sense provision would help taxpayers better understand how their money is being spent, and could help lawmakers better exercise oversight of expired and expiring authorizations of appropriations.

Roll call votes on H.R. 2485 and S. 272 will be included in NTU’s annual Rating of Congress and a “YES” vote will be considered the pro-taxpayer position.

If you have any questions, please contact NTU Director of Federal Policy Andrew Lautz at alautz@ntu.org.