



July 23, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Cole and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of National Taxpayers Union, the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, I write to express our views regarding the FY26 appropriations markup for the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Bill. NTU thanks the Committee for its commitment to fiscal responsibility by proposing to spend less in the upcoming fiscal year than the current one. Enactment at the proposed levels would represent a meaningful step toward restoring fiscal sanity in Washington.

As you know, it has become an unfortunate fact that spending only increases year after year. That is how we've reached close to \$2 trillion in annual deficits and nearly \$37 trillion in debt, both of which are projected to worsen in the years ahead. While our fiscal situation cannot be fixed overnight, NTU is pleased that the proposed legislation reduces discretionary spending by 2.8% compared to FY25.

To be clear: any reduction to discretionary spending is a positive for taxpayers. However, we encourage you to continue to find ways to save more dollars, and, preferably, return to pre-COVID era spending levels. We strongly believe that a return to FY19 spending, coupled with additional DOGE clawbacks and economic growth fueled by pro-growth tax policies can greatly improve our fiscal situation. It would also help buy time to address the core drivers of spending: entitlements.

Specifically, while cutting spending in other areas, the bill proposes a massive 59% increase for the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), the bureau that, among other responsibilities, is pursuing investigations that could result in the imposition of tariffs on copper, timber and lumber, semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, trucks, critical minerals, commercial aircraft, polysilicon, and unmanned aircraft systems. This big funding increase runs counter to the fiscal restraint exhibited elsewhere in the bill. Maintaining BIS spending at FY25 levels would avert this \$112 million spending increase. NTU has long been concerned about a [lack of oversight and accountability](#) regarding Section 232 "national security" investigations conducted by BIS. This issue is particularly timely as businesses around the country contend with tariff costs and the uncertainty surrounding possible new tariffs.

Additional savings could be achieved by paring back the more than 1,000 "member requests" included in the bill, including basketball tournaments, lobster monitoring, and oyster research. There's even \$1,031,000 for the Climate Corps Fellowship East Boston, despite the fact that President Trump terminated the Climate Corps earlier this year. The grand total: more than \$1 billion. NTU has long supported legislation to ban the use of such [earmarks](#).

Thank you for your consideration of our views. In short, we appreciate this legislation's attention to our fiscal situation and we strongly encourage you to reduce discretionary spending even further. Reductions included in this bill and throughout the broader appropriations process can turn around our nation's concerning fiscal outlook.

Sincerely,

Bryan Riley
Director, Free Trade Initiative