

**Amendment 521 – Requires all legislation to be reviewed before it is considered by the Senate to determine whether new duplicative and overlapping programs are being created.**

This bipartisan amendment would require for every bill considered by the Senate:

- 1) an analysis by the Congressional Research Service to determine if the bill creates any new federal program, office, or initiative that would duplicate or overlap any existing federal program, office, or initiative with similar mission, purpose, goals, or activities along with a listing of all of the overlapping or duplicative federal program or programs, office or offices, or initiative or initiatives; and
- 2) an explanation provided by the committee as to why the creation of each new program, office, or initiative is necessary if a similar program or programs, office or offices, or initiative or initiatives already exist.

**Identifies and Helps Prevent Unnecessary Duplication Before It is Created**

Congress creates hundreds of new programs every year, adding to the thousands that already exist. Every time Congress makes a new program that duplicates an existing program, taxpayers must pay for both programs. It also highlights Congress' failure to conduct oversight. If Congress is unaware of existing programs that are not meeting a need, that would indicate those programs are not being held accountable to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

In March, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report examining 34 missions of the federal government identifying hundreds of duplicative and overlapping programs costing approximately \$217 billion a year. GAO stated "reducing or eliminating duplication, overlap, or fragmentation could potentially save billions of taxpayer dollars annually and help agencies provide more efficient and effective services."

GAO found there are 47 separate job training programs, 88 economic development programs, 82 teacher quality programs, and 56 financial literacy programs.

Despite GAO's findings, Congress has been slow to address this problem.

As a candidate for president in 2008, Barack Obama pledged to "eliminate wasteful redundancy." Obama stated "too often, federal departments take on functions or services that are already being done or could be done elsewhere within the federal government more effectively. The result is unnecessary redundancy."

This amendment will ensure Congress and the President are fully aware of other existing programs with similar goals before new similar programs are created.

### **Provides Greater Transparency for Lawmakers and Taxpayers Regarding the Impact of Legislation**

This transparency will ensure greater accountability in the legislative process.

Currently, CRS already provides an analysis of most legislation and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) already scores bills for costs.

These analyses, however, do not examine duplication. GAO's recent report identifying more than \$200 billion in wasteful duplication in just a portion of the federal budget exposed how prevalent and costly this problem has become.

The amendment will ensure taxpayers are provided an explanation from Congress as to why another new program that duplicates one or more existing programs may be needed before a bill is considered. Lawmakers can then make better informed decisions as to whether or not creation of duplication is justified.

Because CRS has long provided lawmakers with independent summaries of bills, the agency is the most appropriate and obvious agency to conduct these analyses.

## **Exempts Legislation that Addressed Emergencies**

Bills designated as “emergency” because they address immediate, unforeseen, and urgent matters would be exempted from the duplication analysis. This will ensure Congress can continue to swiftly address emergencies.