

Questions for the Record
from Senator Murray
for Russell Vought
Nomination To Be Director of the Office of Management and Budget
January 22, 2025
Senate Budget Committee

Question #1:

In your 2021 budget as OMB Director, you proposed significant cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and SNAP, citing the need for fiscal health, and you have continued to advocate for these cuts through your post-OMB work. At the same time, you have been a vocal supporter of the tax cuts enacted in the first Trump Administration, which added trillions of dollars to the deficit—far exceeding the savings from the spending cuts you have proposed.

How do you reconcile supporting tax cuts that dramatically worsen the nation's fiscal position while justifying deep cuts to programs that millions of vulnerable Americans rely on in the name of fiscal health?

The fiscal health of the country depends on a growing economy and thus extending President Trump's tax cuts is a vital component of a balanced fiscal plan. President Trump's budgets were committed to protecting Medicare from cuts, while finding savings in welfare programs to encourage people to enter the labor force.

Question #2:

Numerous studies, including those from the Congressional Budget Office, have shown that increased IRS funding reduces the deficit by improving tax enforcement and closing the tax gap. Given this evidence, do you support recent efforts to rescind IRS funding, which worsens the deficit? If so, why?

I am concerned that increased IRS funding, particularly at the levels witnessed in recent years, would lead to a flood of new auditors that would likely target many small businesses with endless, annual audits. In addition, I am concerned that mandatory funding for the IRS like that contained in the Inflation Reduction Act reduces the oversight of the enforcement process.

Question #3:

Do you commit to provide documents and information in a thorough and timely matter when requested to:

1. *Me and my staff?*
2. *The Government Accountability Office?*
3. *Appropriations Committee members of both parties?*

Yes, subject to the advice of counsel.

Question #4:

Do you commit to follow the Impoundment Control Act in all applicable circumstances and to defend the constitutionality of the law?

President Trump has stated that the ICA is unconstitutional because it “handcuffs” the President’s ability to effectively manage taxpayer resources and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse. I agree with the President’s position. I also set forth my views as OMB Director in my January 19, 2021, letter to John Yarmuth, Chairman of the House Committee on the Budget, which is available at: trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Response-to-House-Budget-Committee-Investigation.pdf.

If I am confirmed as the Director of OMB, I will follow the advice of legal counsel, and ultimately the President, with respect to the implementation of the ICA.

Question #5:

Please describe in detail the process you will use to communicate with the Appropriations Committee and Congress about funds you intend to impound.

In all my responsibilities at OMB, I make it a priority to communicate with all committees of jurisdiction subject to the advice of legal counsel.

Question #6:

Do you commit to following the letter of appropriations laws as enacted - even when they instruct spending money on policy priorities you or President Trump disagree with?

If I am confirmed as OMB Director, I will follow the advice of OMB General Counsel, and ultimately the President on this issue.

Question #7:

How do you intend to ensure OMB apportionments funds consistent with appropriations law? Do you intend to have political appointees approve apportionments, or ensure that responsibility remains primarily with career staff?

As you may know, during the first Trump Administration, I delegated this signing authority for apportionments to a Program Associate Director, and it led to increased effectiveness in being wise stewards of taxpayer dollars. If I am confirmed as OMB Director, I will review and decide to whom to delegate this authority.

Question #8:

In what circumstances will you advise President Trump to impound funds? What funds will you advise President Trump are not appropriate or available for impoundment?

If I am confirmed as OMB Director, I will follow the advice of OMB General Counsel, and ultimately the President on this issue.

Question #9:

Do you see any limits in the President's ability to impound funds? If so, what are they?

If I am confirmed as OMB Director, I will follow the advice of OMB General Counsel, and ultimately the President on this issue.

Question #10:

What will the relationship be between the "Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)" and OMB?

My understanding is that DOGE will provide recommendations to the Trump Administration, including OMB, to assess and potentially adopt. Any authorities used to implement will be exercised by OMB and other components as currently constituted.

Question #11:

Who pays the salaries of people working for DOGE and who do those people report to? What formal or informal relationship will DOGE employees have with OMB?

I have not been privy to the relevant DOGE planning discussions, but DOGE will be an incredible partner to the work of OMB.

Question #12:

What commitments can you provide this committee regarding providing transparency by you and OMB staff regarding any coordination and meetings with DOGE staff, given it is not a nongovernmental entity?

I have not been privy to the relevant DOGE planning discussions, but the Trump Administration is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in general.

Question #13:

Do you agree that any deal on FY25 appropriations must abide by all bipartisan agreements made during negotiations of the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA), including the full amount of NDD resources that were agreed to as part of the FRA?

I will not be able to advise the President on FY25 spending levels until being confirmed by the Senate, and thus am unable to assess the appropriate levels of discretionary spending.

Question #14:

At the time of its passage, you strongly criticized the FRA. What is your opinion of it now and would you recommend President Trump support an agreement that adhered to the FRA?

I will not be able to advise the President on FY25 spending levels until being confirmed by the Senate, and thus am unable to assess the appropriate levels of discretionary spending.