



Bobby Kogan¹

**Senior Director of Federal Budget Policy, Center for American Progress
Testimony Before the House Oversight Subcommittee on Delivering on Government
Efficiency
Hearing on “Doing More with Less: Deleting Duplicative Programs”
February 11, 2026**

Chairman Burchett, Ranking Member Stansbury, members of the Subcommittee, thank you very much for inviting me to testify today.

I am currently the senior director of Federal Budget Policy at the Center for American Progress, an independent, nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. I work to ensure the federal budget prioritizes policies that help the most vulnerable people. Prior to joining American Progress, I served in the Biden-Harris White House as adviser to the director of the Office of Management and Budget, where I assisted with the American Rescue Plan and the Inflation Reduction Act, as well as the president’s budget requests, budget concepts, and budget scorekeeping.

I intend to make three points in my testimony today:

First, the government owes good services to the American people.

Second, looking for duplication should not be a cover for cutting assistance.

And third, any savings from increased efficiency pale in comparison to the costs of tax cuts enacted this century.

To the first point, the purpose of government is to serve. It’s to make people’s lives better. Looking for increased efficiency is a worthy and important goal, and therefore the primary focus of growing efficiency should be about better serving Americans, and only secondarily about reducing costs to the government. In some cases, it may make more sense to have separate applications for programs, and in other cases it may make sense to combine them. But it’s not primarily about the dollars to the government. It’s about efficiency and

efficacy for the people whom the government is serving. If policymakers find a way to cut administrative costs to the federal government by dramatically increasing the burden on the American people, they have made it worse, not better.

Which brings me to my second point. These efforts must not be a secret tool for cutting services themselves. In most cases, programs that people allege are duplicative are not actually duplicative. Frequently, they're deliberately set up to serve different populations, or to address different difficulties.

Consider people who receive Unemployment Insurance while receiving Disability Insurance benefits. Imagine a person who'd been earning a salary and paying into the SSDI Trust Fund for two decades and then became disabled with a traumatic brain injury in a construction accident and started collecting Disability Insurance. While unable to participate in substantial gainful employment, they were able to do part-time work at their local grocery store. Then the grocery store closed and they lost their job. They're now eligible to collect Unemployment Insurance. You can see why society might encourage the person to work at their local grocery store and not want to strip them of their Disability Insurance benefits, and you can see why it then makes sense for them to still receive Unemployment Insurance benefits after losing that job. That's the system working correctly.

Sometimes it can make sense to combine the administration of programs that address different populations or that serve different but related needs. But regardless of the setup, Congress should ensure that the intended groups still receive the intended services and benefits.

Consider the Trump administration's budget proposal to combine 18 separate education grants into a single grant. Most of those 18 grants deliberately serve different populations. For example, the proposal included McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth; Neglected, Delinquent, and At-Risk Children and Youth; Magnet Schools Assistance; Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grants; 21st Century afterschool and summer programs; and Arts in Education for example.² Those deliberately serve different populations and address different needs.

Education is primarily run by states and local governments, and the federal government steps in specifically to address situations in which students would slip through the cracks. The grants deliberately target different populations in order to prevent specific groups from falling behind. Combining them into a single block grant defeats that purpose. It could make sense to have all these programs run differently, or to have a single application form

for all of them to make enrollment simpler. But it does not make sense to make them all into a single block grant that is no longer required to serve the intended purposes.

Now, there are some duplicative or fragmented programs. Sometimes combining in full will be better, and sometimes doing so even saves on the cost of administration. But that can't be an excuse to cut the benefits themselves. Suppose there are two \$50 million programs that do the same thing, and Congress gets rid of one of them. That's not simply eliminating duplication. That's eliminating \$50 million in benefits and making people worse off.

Furthermore, block granting programs has traditionally led to dramatic cuts to services, and oftentimes led to less oversight. The quintessential example is TANF, whose real value has declined by roughly 60 percent since its creation—and which now allows for so much discretion that it barely serves its actual purpose of providing basic assistance for children anymore.³

And in fact the Trump administration's proposal to combine education grants, in addition to no longer necessarily serving their intended recipients, calls for an immediate cut of more than two-thirds to these programs as a whole.⁴

If a plan is getting savings purely by cutting benefits, it's doing it wrong. And if it's only getting savings from more efficient administration of programs, there just isn't very much there.⁵

That brings me to the final point, which is, if Congress really is focused on the deficit, pinching pennies around the administration of programs is the wrong area. If Congress implemented every single recommendation in GAO's giant report, that would amount to, very roughly, \$20 billion in savings each year.⁶

The tax cuts from the Big Beautiful Bill lost 25 to 30 times that much in federal revenue.⁷ In other words, you could take every recommendation GAO offered in its annual report on opportunities to reduce fragmentation, overlap, and duplication – noting by the way that the hypermajority of those savings do not actually come from stopping duplicative programs and instead come from proposals such as having Medicare make site-neutral payments and ensuring better IRS enforcement against tax cheats – and this Congress would still be in the red by more than half a trillion dollars every year because of the tax cuts this body enacted seven months ago. The 10-year cost of the tax cuts that began in 2017 and then were made permanent and expanded last year is \$5.8 trillion over the decade, assuming the new temporary provisions are extended.⁸ The Bush tax cuts lose that much in revenue again, even assuming a permanent AMT patch had been enacted beforehand and so do not count as part of the cost of the Bush tax cuts.⁹ On top of that

more than \$1 trillion in lost revenue every year from those tax cuts, the government loses another \$725 billion each year from tax cheats and misfiled taxes.¹⁰

The logic of working hard to find every single penny of efficiency in spending on programs that serve ordinary people is never applied to the richest Americans and their taxes. The richest Americans are not asked to do more with less. Tax cuts for the richest Americans are not subjected to any sort of efficiency test. In fact, it's the other way around. Congress keeps coming up with new and creative ways to cut taxes for those with the most, with hardly any economic justification in many cases.

In contrast, the Big Beautiful Bill actually made the largest cuts to the social safety net in all of U.S. history, taking food away from hungry children and health care away from sick Americans.

I think that bringing down deficits from current levels is a good goal if done responsibly in a way that doesn't hurt working and struggling Americans by cutting crucial programs they rely on. And Congress should look first to reversing some of the tax cuts enacted this century that are costing the government more than \$1 trillion per year.

Thank you.

¹ Huge thanks to Richard Kogan, Michael Linden, Indivar Dutta-Gupta and my colleagues at American Progress, including Emily Gee, Madeline Shepherd, Corey Husak, Weadé James, Casey Peaks, Mia Ives-Rublee and Kennedy Andara for helpful feedback and assistance.

² U.S. Department of Education, "Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Summary" (Washington, DC: May 2025), available at <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fiscal-year-2026-budget-summary-110043.pdf>.

³ For the 60 percent figure, this refers to the change in value after adjusting for both inflation and population growth, author's calculations from U.S. Office of Management and Budget, "Public Budget Database, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2025," available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BUDGET-2025-DB/xls/BUDGET-2025-DB-1.xlsx>; Congressional Budget Office, "The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2025 to 2035" (Washington, DC: January 2025), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61172> and U.S. Office of Social Security, "Social Security area population as of January 1, using intermediate assumptions of the 2025 Trustees Report" (Washington, DC: June 2025), <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/Downloadables/CY/index.html>. For the other statement, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) at 26," August 4, 2022, available at <https://www.cbpp.org/media/states-spend-few-tanf-funds-on-basic-assistance-the-rest-is-not-well-targeted-to-families> (last accessed February 9, 2026).

⁴ Erik Peterson, "FY 2026 Budget Proposal details released: Administration eliminates dedicated funding for afterschool and summer," May 31, 2025, available at https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/afterschoolsnack/FY-2026-Budget-Proposal-details-released-Administration_05-31-2025.cfm.

⁵ Arloc Sherman, Danilo Trisi, and Sharon Parrott, "Various Supports for Low-Income Families Reduce Poverty and Have Long-Term Positive Effects On Families and Children" (Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 2013), available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/various-supports-for-low-income-families-reduce-poverty-and-have-long-term-positive#low-income-programs-have-modest-administrative-cbpp-anchor>.

⁶ Author's calculations from Table 6 from "United States Government Accountability Office, "2025 Annual Report: Opportunities to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication and Achieve an Additional One Hundred Billion Dollars or More in Future Financial Benefits" (Washington, DC: May 2025), available at https://files.gao.gov/reports/GAO-25-107604/index.html?_gl=1*1aaw50l*_ga*MTczMDMzNzkzNy4xNzcwMzk1NzA1*_ga_V393SNS3SR*_czE3NzA1MDM3NzYkbzZkZzEkdDE3NzA1MDUxNzEkajYwJGwwJGgw.

⁷ Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Budgetary Effects of Public Law 119-21, to Provide for Reconciliation Pursuant to Title II of H. Con. Res. 14, Relative to CBO's January 2025 Baseline" (Washington, DC: July 2025), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61570>.

⁸ Estimates are for fiscal years 2026-2035 from the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, on file with author.

⁹ Author's calculations from Congressional Budget Office, "The Long-Term Budget Outlook" (Washington, DC: December 2005), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/17558>; Congressional Budget Office, "Congressional Budget Office Pay-As-You-Go Estimate: Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001, H.R. 1836" (Washington: 2001), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/107th-congress-2001-2002/costestimate/hr1836omb0.pdf>; Congressional Budget Office, "Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate: Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003, H.R. 2" (Washington, DC: May 2003), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/14462>; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Table 1.1.5. Gross Domestic Product" available at https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/?reqid=19&step=2&isuri=1&categories=survey&_gl=1*1szuld9*_ga*OTE5ODc0MjE0LjE3NTcwNzcwNjI.*_ga_J4698JNNFT*_czE3NzA2NjYzMDkzZzEkdDE3NzA2NjYzMDYkajU1JGwwJGgw#eyJhcHBpZCI6MTkslnN0ZXBzljpbMSwyLDMsM10slmRhdGEiOiQ3Ii0sWyJMYXN0X1llyXliLClYMDI1Ii0sWyJTY2FsZSIsIi02Ii0sWyJTZXJpZXMlLCJRIl1dfQ== (last accessed February 2026); Congressional Budget Office, "The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2025 to 2035" (Washington, DC: January 2025), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61172>.

¹⁰ Author's calculations from U.S. Internal Revenue Service, "Federal Tax Compliance Research: Tax Gap Projections for Tax Year 2022" (Washington, DC: 2022), available at <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p5869.pdf>; Congressional Budget Office, "The Budget and Economic Outlook: 2025 to 2035" (Washington, DC: January 2025), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61172>; Congressional Budget Office, "Estimated Budgetary Effects of Public Law 119-21, to Provide for Reconciliation Pursuant to Title II of H. Con. Res. 14, Relative to CBO's January 2025 Baseline" (Washington, DC: July 2025), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61570>.