

# United States Senate

September 24, 2021

The Honorable Shalanda Young  
Director (Acting)  
Office of Management and Budget (OMB)  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Acting Director Young:

As we continue our important work to help American families and businesses during this unprecedented and challenging time, it is my hope that you share my commitment to spending taxpayer dollars wisely and focus on ensuring a positive return on every dollar spent.

Nearly \$6 trillion in federal dollars have been appropriated among six massive spending bills to address the COVID-19 pandemic since it began in 2020. My focus in each of these spending bills was to ensure funding was directed to provide targeted relief to shorten the pandemic and its effects, save American lives and American jobs and allow families and businesses in Florida and across the nation to return to normal life. For months<sup>1</sup>, I've requested transparency from OMB on how the trillions allocated for COVID relief has been allocated to no avail, but taxpayers deserve accountability. To ensure these funds are being spent in accordance with those goals, please provide answers to the following questions:

- What action is OMB taking to increase and improve the availability and transparency of government spending data as it relates to appropriated COVID-19 relief funding?
- What metrics are being used by OMB to track the progress and efficiency of these programs and activities toward these goals?
- How much of this COVID-19 relief funding still remains available and unspent to date? Please specify the dollar amounts by agency and program across all six spending bills. What plans does OMB have to make this information public and regularly updated?

With the significant increase in federal spending related to COVID-19 and related economic relief, a continued and increased focus on reducing improper payments across the federal government is absolutely critical to providing accountability for

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/2021/2/sen-rick-scott-omb-taxpayers-need-transparency-45-trillion-allocated-covid-relief>

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taxpayers. In fiscal year 2020, estimates of improper payments totaled \$206 billion, up from \$175 billion in fiscal year 2019, which means billions of taxpayer dollars are wasted and providing zero return to American families. Given OMB's key role in the oversight of government-wide improper payments and providing guidance to agencies on assessing the risk of improper payments and estimating them, I'd like to request the following information:

- What is OMB doing to track and reduce government-wide improper payments, particularly for programs and activities funded with money intended for COVID-19 relief?
- Further, OMB's latest improper payments guidance does not specifically direct agencies to include COVID-19 relief funding with associated key risks as part of their improper payment estimate methodologies.<sup>2</sup> Without this, we cannot ensure that agencies have reliable improper payment estimates. What plans does OMB have to address and fix this omission, and further ensure agencies' improper payment estimates are accurate and reliable?
- Does OMB have guidance and/or requirements in place for agencies to claw back payments deemed to have been improperly or fraudulent disbursed?

Our federal debt is nearing an unsustainable \$30 trillion and climbing. We must get serious about how we're spending taxpayer dollars and ensure every dollar spent provides a positive return on investment for Americans. We cannot afford to mortgage the future of our children and grandchildren with shortsighted and dangerous financial decisions.

I look forward to your prompt response to these important questions.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott  
United States Senator

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/M-21-19.pdf>