

OPPOSITION TO "SUNSET COMMISSION" SECTIONS
OF SENATOR GREGG'S S.O.S. ACT (S. 3521)

June 19, 2006

Dear Senator:

Good government is effective, efficient, accountable and responsive to the needs of its citizens. Sunset Commission legislation, while touted as a tool for good government, would do nothing to improve the workings of our federal government. Instead, these proposals will allow an unelected, unaccountable body to dismantle important and beneficial federal programs without public input or Congressional oversight and expertise. As a coalition genuinely concerned with good government, we strongly urge you to oppose the sunset commission language in Senator Gregg's S. 3521.

Sunset commissions offer a misguided approach to government accountability:

- **Sunset commissions are unnecessary and duplicative:** Congress, through its authorization and appropriations processes, and other federal bodies such as the Government Accountability Office and Inspectors General are already charged with overseeing federal programs and agencies. The Congressional Research Service concluded in 1998 that, instead of stopping waste and duplication, "the commission, ironically, is itself an example of an agency 'for which a public need does not exist.'"
- **Sunset commissions would make decisions behind closed doors:** The commission would make its evaluations behind closed doors, without public notice or comment or open meetings, and without allowing Congress to request documents and transcripts. Proponents argue that a sunset commission would be modeled on the successful Base Realignment and Closure Commission, but sunset proposals lack the congressional confirmation requirement, open government provisions, and very discrete purpose of BRAC.
- **Sunset commissions would eliminate important and beneficial programs:** With its recommendations "fast tracked," Congress and the committees of jurisdiction would be left with just a single up or down vote, potentially involving hundreds of programs impacting education, the environment, workers, housing, nutrition, transportation, and other programs on which we rely for a better, productive America.
- **Sunset commissions would shift power away from Congress:** The legislation would shift the responsibilities of authorizing, reauthorizing, and funding the federal government from an elected Congress to an unelected and unaccountable Commission. Two administrations' Departments of Justice and CRS have already declared similar past proposals to be unconstitutional. Instead of a government run by citizen-selected leaders, we would be entrusting fundamental questions of the structure and function of government to an unelected commission.

We oppose Sunset Commission legislation and its inevitable consequences: sweeping shifts in the separation of powers that would constrict congressional authority; diminished transparency and citizen participation in our government; and extermination of critical programs and agencies. For these reasons, we urge you to oppose Sunset Commission legislation.

Sincerely,

9to5 Poverty Network Initiative
A Nurturing Experience
Advocacy Committee of Clackamas County Social Services
Advocacy for the Poor, Inc.
Affordable Housing Activists
Alaska Rainforest Campaign
Alliance for Children and Families
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association on Mental Retardation
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association of University Women
American Bottom Conservancy
American Counseling Association

American Federation of Government Employees
American Federation of Labor - Congress of Industrial
Organizations
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal
Employees
American Federation of Teachers
Americans for Democratic Action
American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO
Anixter Center
Appalachian Voices
The Arc of Anne Arundel County
The Arc of the U.S.
Archdiocese of Louisville
Arkansas Hunger Coalition

Arizona Advocacy Network
Arizona Pain & Rehab. Clinic
Arroyo Seco Foundation
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association for Children of New Jersey
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Association of Writers & Writing Programs
Berea Children's Home & Family Services
Blue Ridge Independent Living Center
California Church IMPACT
Campaign for Working Families
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Independence of the Disabled
Center for Independent Living of South Florida
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center on Senior Services
Central New York Services, Inc
Chase Brexton Health Services
Chesapeake Clean Water Action
Child Welfare League of America
Citizen Action of Illinois
Citizen Action of New York
Citizen Action of Wisconsin
Citizens Budget Campaign
Clean Water Action
Coalition on Human Needs
Coastal Community Action, Inc.
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Common Cause
Communications Workers of America
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
Connecticut Association of Nonprofits
Connecticut Citizen Action Group
Connecticut Nonprofit Human Services Cabinet
Consumer Federation of America
Corflex Communicatons
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
Council of the Great City Schools
The Cross Disability Rights Coalition
Defenders of Wildlife
Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council
Denver Urban Ministries
Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO
Disability Resource Agency for Independent Living
Dominican Sisters: Grand Rapids
Doorways for Women and Families
Earthjustice
Easter Seals Connecticut/Rhode Island
Endangered Species Coalition
Environmental Defense
Environmental Integrity Project
Epilepsy Foundation
Epiphany House, Inc.
Every Child Matters Education Fund
Everywoman Opportunity Center
Fair Housing Center of Nebraska
Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama
Families USA

Family Service of Greater Waterbury, Inc.
Federation of Fly Fishers
Florida Consumer Action Network
Food & Water Watch
Forest Guardians
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Friends of Grays Harbor
Friends of the Earth
Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Georgia Task Force for the Homeless
Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger
Gulf Restoration Network
Harlem Center for Education
Heal the Bay
Hispanic Federation
House the Homeless
Human Services Council
Hunger Solutions Minnesota
The IHM Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office
Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities
Independence Now, Inc.
The Institute for Peace and Justice
International Federation of Professional & Technical Engineers
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades
InterReligious Council of Central New York
Iowa Association for College Admission Counseling
Iowa Citizen Action Network
Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island, Inc.
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington
Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Just Harvest
Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities
Kentucky Council for Children with Behavior Disorders
Kentucky Council on Developmental Disabilities
Kids Project
Lake Champlain Committee
Lake County Center for Independent Living
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
League of Conservation Voters
League of Human Dignity
League of United Latin American Citizens
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Legal Momentum
Life Crisis
LifeTies, Inc.
Long Term Care Community Coalition
Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Maine Developmental Disabilities Council
Maine People's Alliance
Marion County Democrats
Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland Institute College of Art
Maryland Association of Nonprofit Association
Maternal and Child Health Access
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO
Merlin & Associates, Inc.
Michigan Citizen Action

Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council
Michigan League for Human Services
Michigan Nonprofit Association
Middlesex Coalition for Children
Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition
Moline Housing Authority
Moline Housing Authority Resident Advisory Board
Mount St Joseph-St Elizabeth
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Association for College Admission Counseling
National Association for the Education of Young Children
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Center for Children in Poverty
National Center for Law and Economic Justice
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
National Community Action Foundation
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Jewish Women, Rhode Island
National Council of Nonprofit Associations
National Council on Aging
National Council on Independent Living
National Education Association
National Environmental Trust
National Low Income Housing Coalition
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Organization for Women
National Priorities Project
National WIC Association
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Natural Resources Defense Council
National Respite Coalition
Native Ecosystems
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
New England Clean Water Action
New Hampshire Citizens Alliance
New Jersey Citizen Action
New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
New Mexico Progressive Alliance for Community Empowerment
New Mexico Voices for Children
Niagara Frontier Center for Independent Living, Inc
North Carolina Center for Nonprofits
North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities
North Dakota Progressive Coalition
Northgate Housing, Inc.
Northgate Residents' Association
Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council
OMB Watch

Oregon Action
Oregon AFL-CIO
Oregon Law Center
Pax Christi Northwest Minnesota
Pennsylvania Action
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Head Start Association
People Escaping Poverty Project
People For the American Way
Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Pocono Healthy Communities Alliance
Positive Resistance
Prevent Child Abuse Hampton Roads
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Progressive Maryland
Protestants for the Common Good
Public Citizen
Public Justice Center
Residents for Affordable Housing
RESULTS St.Louis
RESULTS Des Moines
RESULTS Tulsa
Rhode Island Ocean State Action
ROSE Community Development
Sacred Heart Franciscan Province JPIC
Saint Peter Damien Fraternity
Sarah House, Inc.
Save Our Services
School Social Work Association of America
SEMO Alliance for Disability Independence, Inc.
Service Employees International Union
Shalomsalaam
Shrine of the Black Madonna #10 of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church
Sierra Club
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Society of Jesus, New York Province
Sojourners and Call to Renewal
SOLUTIONS Consulting Group, LLC
South Carolina Association of Nonprofit Organizations
South Carolina Developmental Council
South Dakota Clean Water Action
South Dakota Women Work!
Spectrum Support, Inc.
St. Joseph Priory
St. Rose of Lima Social Responsibility Commission
Statewide Poverty Action Network
Stone Belt Arc, Incorporated
Solutions to Issues of Concern to Knoxvilleians
Southwestern Center for Independent Living
Tin Pan Alley Productions
Tennessee Citizen Action
Tennessee Clean Water Network
Tennessee Health Care Campaign
Tennessee Izaak Walton League
Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
Transport Workers Union

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices in
Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry
United Auto Workers
United Cerebral Palsy
United for a Fair Economy
United Steelworkers
United Vision for Idaho
Universal Living Wage Campaign
University of Maryland Medical Center
USAction
USAction Education Fund
Voice of the Retarded
Voices for America's Children
Waimaha/Sunflower Residents' Association Inc.
Washington Citizen Action
Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition
West Virginia Citizen Action Group
Western Maryland Area Health Education Center
Wilderness Society
Wilkinson County Board of Education
Wisconsin Citizen Action
Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities