



REGULATORY POLICY PROGRAM www.ombwatch.org/regs

Tell Your Representative That You Are Opposed to Sunset Commissions!

If you come across your representative in Congress, take the opportunity to raise your concerns about the radical proposal for federal sunset commissions, which would force all government programs—from CDBG to TANF, EPA to Veterans' Affairs, Head Start to Even Start, DHS to DOD, and everything in between—to plead for their lives before an unelected commission.

Seize the Opportunity

November elections are just months away, so your representative in the House will probably be spending time back in the district holding town hall forums, making speeches, and kissing babies. Now is the perfect time to let your representative know that you are concerned about radical proposals for sunset commissions!

Any chance you get — whether it's a question-and-answer session or just going down the line to shake your member's hand — is a chance to register your concerns. Take it!

State your concern: Whatever chance you get to speak, start right off the bat by stating your concern: "I am very concerned about Congress considering creating sunset commissions."

Explain the issue: Your member probably isn't expecting the issue to come up, so give a quick explanation: "The House leadership just promised a group of the most ultra-conservative members that there will be a vote on sunset commissions. If this radical proposal goes through, it would mean that every single federal program would be forced to beg for its life in front of an unelected commission that gets to decide whether it lives or dies."

Say what it means to you: Your member needs to hear that sunsets are a bad idea, but also that they will have consequences for you. Here are some ideas:

- Programs that you care about are at risk: "I am really concerned about _____. I think there's no doubt at all that we need this program. It will be a waste of resources for that program to have to beg for its life; that's money that should be spent on the good things that program does."
- Programs that you care about are probably on the chopping block: If your program has been repeatedly set up for budget cuts or being eliminated, that program would probably be especially at risk from a sunset commission. "A sunset commission would take its cues from the White House's assessment of programs. Year after year, the White House argues that _____ should be cut or eliminated. That troubles me, because that means that _____ is particularly at risk from a sunset commission."
- Programs that you care about could be killed with no warning: "Some of the sunset proposals would actually allow the sunset commission to decide what programs live or die, without ever having any hearings or letting us come in to defend the program. And Congress would have extreme limits on its ability to debate the sunset commission's recommendations, or make changes to save important programs."
- Your tax dollars would be wasted: "There's just no need for this kind of waste. Congress already has the power to kill programs any time it wants, and it already spends most of its time every year deciding whether to give them any funding. We know that we need programs like EPA, or the Department of Education, or veterans' support programs. It would be a waste of my taxpayer dollars to force these programs to take time away from serving us in order to beg for their lives."

Demand your representative to take a stand. "I am opposed to a federal sunset commission. I want to know where you stand on sunset commissions. Will you allow the House to vote on sunset commissions? If there is a vote, will you vote against it?"