TAXPAYERS for COMMON SENSE

November 17, 2026

Follow Statute when Selecting Comptroller General

Dear Chairman Paul, Ranking Member Peters, and Members of the Committee,

Taxpayers for Common Sense urges you not to advance the nomination of Eric Ueland, deputy director for management at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to serve as Comptroller General through the rushed process now underway. This appointment will shape congressional oversight for the next 15 years. It deserves the bicameral, bipartisan nominee selection process, followed by a separate debate and vote, as statute requires. Only by following the established, bipartisan nomination process can Congress ensure that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is strengthened as an independent, nonpartisan watchdog working in the interest of taxpayers.

For more than 30 years, Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS) has advocated for responsible federal spending and independent oversight of taxpayer dollars. The Government Accountability Office is essential to that work. As head of the GAO, the Comptroller General guides an agency that helps Congress guard the power of the purse and improve government performance through fact-based audits, evaluations, and legal decisions across congressional sessions and presidential administrations. From 2001 – 2021, GAO's work resulted in $1.2 trillion in financial benefit to the federal government. Lawmakers must protect the independence of the agency that helps them exercise their Article I responsibilities and saves the taxpayers money.

GAO's credibility as an independent, nonpartisan tool for accountability is so important that Congress established a bicameral, bipartisan process to identify candidates for Comptroller General. For five decades, presidents followed this process, which respects the interests of the minority and majority in both chambers while including presidential input. Presidents as diverse in their ideologies as Reagan, Clinton, and Obama waited for the commission's recommendations before submitting a nominee.

That collaboration across branches and parties, which is critical to public confidence in GAO as a credible, nonpartisan watchdog, is now at risk. OMB Director Russ Vought has said GAO "shouldn't exist." President Trump has now short-circuited the statutory process

and nominated Vought's deputy to lead GAO. The president's decision to sidestep Congress raises serious doubts about whether the nominee would hold the administration accountable. More fundamentally, it calls into question whether Mr. Ueland understands the Comptroller General's responsibility to defend Congress's Article I powers on behalf of all taxpayers.

In September, TCS joined organizations across the political spectrum in urging Congress to change the appointment process so that Congress itself chooses the head of its watchdog agency. The principle is straightforward. An agency charged with scrutinizing the executive branch should have leadership selected independently of the officials it oversees. Congress should address that institutional question before committing to another 15-year appointment.

There is no leadership emergency that justifies this rush. GAO has experienced acting leadership with the authority to carry out the office's duties. As our September coalition letter noted, the agency operated under acting Comptrollers General for more than two years before David Walker took office and again before Gene Dodaro took office. Congress has time to get this right.

We urge the committee to pause consideration of the nomination and address the appointment reforms we supported in September. Senate leadership should keep this nomination out of any lame-duck package and insist on a separate debate and vote. Congress should not put its oversight authority at risk for the sake of clearing its year-end calendar.

Sincerely,

Steve Ellis
President
Taxpayers for Common Sense