March 9, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the more than 1 million members and supporters of the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW), I urge you to support H.R. 5741, the Strengthening Innovation in Medicare and Medicaid Act. This bipartisan legislation would increase transparency and accountability within the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI.)

CCAGW has had concerns over CMMI from its inception. Congress relinquished too much power and authority to create and test payment models in Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program. CMMI funding is on autopilot with $10 billion for its first 10 years and into perpetuity, models can be designed and implemented without the regular notice and comment period, and there is no judicial review.

H.R. 5741 will make several important changes to CMMI, like creating an expedited Congressional disapproval process for models; providing a process for public input on the creation and testing of healthcare delivery models; limiting demonstration models to five years; requiring only the number of beneficiaries needed to provide for a stylistically viable sample; and, putting more controls on the Department of Health and Human Services by requiring the agency to monitor its models and the effect they have on individuals, mitigating adverse impacts.

CCAGW agrees with the assessment that innovation in healthcare safety net programs to improve care and lower costs should be encouraged, but additional guardrails and transparency are needed at CMMI to protect patients, providers, and taxpayers, and avoid politicized or risky policies from being implemented.

H.R. 5741 will bring important oversight and direct congressional control over CMMI. We urge members of congress to co-sponsor and pass this legislation.

Sincerely,

Thomas Schatz