



The Trouble With the CBO

If you have been watching the news coming from Washington in recent months, you will likely have heard mentioned again and again “the CBO score.” The release of the CBO score on a federal legislative proposal is treated as a marquee event. When a score is released, it is treated by the media as the definitive cost assessment of a proposal’s impact.

Because the CBO has been consistently wrong, I believe its image as an authoritative arbiter is undeserved.

First of all, what is the CBO? It is the Congressional Budget Office, created by the 1974 Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act. It was intended to provide Congress with a budgetary resource of its own in order to reclaim authority from the executive branch. However, it is now undermining that goal. When the supposedly authoritative experts at the CBO release a score, their predictions are treated as gospel by the media. Congress often defers to these predictions. When it does so, it effectively lets the CBO call the shots on de-

isions that should be made by the people’s elected representatives

This deference is more concerning considering the CBO’s questionable track record of predictions. The agency admits, “Judging the accuracy of the CBO’s cost estimates for legislation that is ultimately enacted is often quite difficult.” I agree this is true. Because it is true, we should use a different and hopefully more accurate approach for scoring proposals.

For example, the CBO has repeatedly underestimated revenues generated by the sale of wireless spectrum. When Congress authorized the Federal Communications Commission to auction spectrum in 2012, the CBO predicted that the total profit to the government over ten years would be \$15 billion. One particular auction in 2015 was predicted by CBO to generate no revenue. Instead, that sale netted \$40 billion. As then-FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel, an Obama appointee, observed after that auction, “Our airwaves are extraordinarily valuable but our accounting systems for measuring them in the legislative process don’t ap-

pear to be fully up to date.”

The CBO has also misjudged farm bills, which are reauthorized roughly every five years, by considerable margins. It underestimated the cost of the 2002 bill by \$137 Billion and the 2008 bill by \$309 Billion. Predictions on the most recent farm bill look unlikely to be on target as well.

The CBO often gets its predictions wrong because it fails to take into account how laws might lead people to change their behavior. For example, in March 2010, the month that Obamacare was signed into law, the CBO predicted that 8 million people would be covered by the insurance exchanges in 2014, 13 million people in 2015, and 21 million people in 2016. As it turned out, only 6.3 million people had a paid-for plan through the exchanges in 2014, 8.8

million in 2015, and 9.1 million in 2016. The CBO overestimated the number of people covered by the Obamacare exchanges because it assumed that people would buy insurance simply because they were mandated to do so. The analysis did not consider that many people would look at the products on the exchanges, find them of poor value, and decide that paying the penalty for not buying insurance made more financial sense. People are not a variable to be inserted into an equation, but will change their behavior based on what makes sense for them in a given set of circumstances.

When an agency repeatedly gives you inaccurate information, should you keep listening to them? I don’t think so.

I believe the CBO has accrued undue influence in

the legislative process. The CBO was created to help elected officials craft better policy, not to decide policy for them. I am working with some of my colleagues to restructure the CBO so that it better fulfills its mission of providing budgetary advice. The CBO can have a constructive role to play, but it should not stand in the way of solving problems.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact my office. You can call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405 or my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671. To reach my office via email, please visit my website at www.morgangriffith.house.gov. Also on my website is the latest material from my office, including information on votes recently taken on the floor of the House of Representatives.



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Since 2009 Virginia has **reduced annual** funding for education to Giles County by **1.9 million dollars**. In Giles County we recognize our need for education funding with 58% of our County budget going to public education. Over the past several years, the County and School System have implemented various cost saving measures to offset the reduced funding from the state. We are implementing an evaluation of our current facilities use, have consolidated janitorial and maintenance services, improved bus route efficiency, revisited all outside service contracts to capture additional savings, transitioned our lighting to LED in buildings and parking lots, and many other cost savings initiatives. We have reached a point where additional reductions will result in loss of jobs and school programs. The teachers, school system staff, and School Board Members are asking the tax payers of Giles County if you are willing to pay increased property taxes to produce additional revenue that would be dedicated solely to increasing our teacher’s pay. Our teacher’s pay ranks in the bottom 1/3 compared to other local school systems in District B which includes Montgomery, Radford, Floyd, Wythe, Pulaski, Galax, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, and Bland Counties.

District B Salary Ranking (BA)*							
Years Experience	Ranking In			Ranking Out Of 11			
	Low	High	Giles Schools	Current	2% Raise	6% Raise	12% Raise
0	\$32,300	\$38,569	\$34,310	9	8	8	3
5	\$33,931	\$40,802	\$36,780	8	8	7	1
10	\$35,396	\$42,697	\$39,700	8	7	3	1
15	\$39,678	\$46,223	\$43,064	6	3	2	1
20	\$43,024	\$50,190	\$46,897	3	3	2	1
25	\$47,015	\$54,603	\$51,147	6	3	2	1
30	\$43,616	\$64,028	\$55,337	7	7	4	2

*Based on 2016-2017 salary scale information

The time has come for the citizens of Giles County to show our teachers that we want them to stay in our schools with our kids and that we value them as much as other local school systems and counties value their teachers. Compared to our neighboring school systems, Giles County Schools currently rank 9th for starting teacher pay and 8th for teachers with 5 – 10 years of experience. We rank 6th for 15 years and 25 years of experience and 7th for teachers with 30 years of experience. The only experience range where we are competitive is 20 years of experience where we rank 3rd. How can we expect our teachers to continue to stay in our school system when other school systems within driving distance pay \$3,000 to \$8,000 more annually for the same services that our teachers provide our students here in Giles County?

The long term goal is to continue our relentless pursuit of increased state funding through visits to Richmond, news articles, and overall increased awareness of the issues that our school system is facing. What will our teachers do while people in Richmond continue to ignore us? A 1% pay increase for our school employees costs \$176,000. A 2% raise barely covers the increased cost of health insurance that are imposed on our teachers each year. A 6% raise begins to make our salaries more competitive and actually results in our teachers taking extra money home so they can afford to buy more school supplies for their students, an activity that should riddle us with embarrassment.

Percent Pay Increase	Percent Property Tax Increase Per \$100	Cost
2%	\$0.03	\$352,000
4%	\$0.06	\$704,000
6%	\$0.10	\$1,056,000
8%	\$0.13	\$1,408,000
10%	\$0.16	\$1,760,000
15%	\$0.24	\$2,640,000

What are you willing to pay to compensate our teachers for providing counseling, pottie training, social service support, life coaching, mentoring, and educating. When asked if you would pay additional taxes, everyone will want to know what that will mean for their individual situation. Your teacher focused tax increase will be based on the value of the property that you own. For example, to provide our teachers a 6% pay increase, tax payers with \$50,000 of property would pay an additional \$50 per year while someone with property worth \$500,000 would pay an additional \$500 per year.

2% Pay Increase		6% Pay Increase		10% Increase	
\$0.03 Property Tax Increase		\$0.10 Increase		\$0.16 Increase	
Property Value	Annual Rate Increase	Property Value	Annual Rate Increase	Property Value	Annual Rate Increase
\$50,000	\$15	\$50,000	\$50	\$50,000	\$80
\$150,000	\$45	\$150,000	\$150	\$150,000	\$240
\$250,000	\$75	\$250,000	\$250	\$250,000	\$400
\$500,000	\$150	\$500,000	\$500	\$500,000	\$800
\$1,000,000	\$300	\$1,000,000	\$1,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,600

What are we willing to do as County citizens to keep our teachers and show them that we care? Let your School Board Members know what you think so we can take action. Visit sbo.gilesk12.org and complete a survey to let us know if you are willing to help our teachers. If you do not have computer access, please stop by the School Board Office to pick up a copy to complete.

Spotlight on events in Giles and Monroe Counties

Pancake breakfast July 29th at Ballard VFD. 7:00 – 10:30 a.m. Two and under eat free. Proceeds go to local church groups.

The New River Valley Agency on Aging is partnering with Carilion Giles Community Hospital to provide a Live Well, Virginia! Chronic disease self-management workshop at the hospital in the Cascades Room starting Monday, August 7, 2017 from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. for adults of all ages with any type of chronic health condition. During the free six week workshop series, participants will meet once per week on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. to learn a variety of self-management skills. For more information or to register for the upcoming workshop, contact Tina King at 540-980-7720 or tinaking@nrvaooa.org.

Vacation Bible School for all age children, Monday, July 31st – Friday, August 4th. Theme is The Redeemer. Teachings, crafts, snacks and more. Looking forward to seeing you at 805 Henson Avenue,

Pearisburg Church of God 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. each night. Any questions contact coordinator Amanda Sarver at 540-626-7052.

Fellowship dinner at Mount Lebanon Methodist Church, Hoges Chapel outside of Pembroke. Come join us on Saturday, July 29th at 5:00 p.m.

The Giles County Shooting Association will meet the 4th Thursday of every month at the American Legion Hall in Narrows at 7:00 p.m.

Fundraiser; BBQ Dinners and sandwiches; Yard Sale; At God’s House, 258 Lebanon Rd, Pembroke, VA 24136, from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., Saturday, July 29, 2017. Come enjoy lunch or take home for dinner a BBQ Dinner with all the fixings. We have a variety of items for sale in our yard sale. We are sure you can find something you could use. For more info, contact, Kathy Atkinson, (423)360-1327.

