

Memoranda 00-21 -- OMB Clearance of Agency Communications with Congress

May 22, 2001

M-01-21

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Sean O'Keefe
Deputy Director

SUBJECT: OMB Clearance of Agency Communications with Congress

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate how important it is that agencies' proposed communications to Congress on legislative matters be fully coordinated within the Administration. In support of this goal, it has been a long-standing policy that agencies work with OMB and obtain OMB clearance on all communications with Congress.

This is particularly important as Congress begins formulation of FY 2002 appropriations bills because your agency may wish, or may be asked by Congress, to comment on appropriations bills as they are being developed. It is essential that Administration policy be coordinated. To ensure that proper coordination occurs, please make sure that all appropriations-related materials, including drafts of written responses to congressional inquiries, capability statements, appeals letters, and letters to congressional committees on appropriations matters, are sent to OMB for review and clearance in accordance with Section 36.3 of Circular A-11. This policy applies to all Executive Branch officials and staff.

Section 36 of Circular A-11 was attached to memorandum M-01-17, which noted the importance of preserving the confidentiality of the deliberations that led to the President's budget decisions. If you require another copy of Circular A-11.

As Director Daniels explained in his memorandum of February 15, 2001 (M-01-12), agencies are also required to send drafts of legislative proposals, as well as reports and testimony on pending legislation, to OMB for review and clearance under Circular A-19 before transmitting them to Congress.

Adherence to these guidelines should help to ensure that the Administration is successful in its legislative strategy. Thank you for your cooperation.

