



December 4, 2018

Bipartisan Budget Reform

On November 29, 2018, House Budget Committee Chairman Steve Womack and Ranking Member John Yarmuth [introduced H.R. 7191, the Bipartisan Budget and Appropriations Reform Act of 2018](#), to advance reforms to the broken Congressional budget process.

It is evident that the process to fund the Federal Government is badly in need of reform. Since 1977, the Federal Government has shut down 19 times and Congress has enacted 176 stopgap continuing resolutions (CRs) to fund the government between then and 2017. Further, Congress has failed to follow regular order to fund the Federal Government every year since fiscal year 1995. This record is unacceptable. While some good progress has been made to fund the government on time for fiscal year 2019, passing five of twelve appropriations bills prior to the start of the new fiscal year, seven bills remain unfinished.

H.R. 7191 is an important first step toward fixing the broken budget process. It advances reforms with proven bipartisan, bicameral support to ensure government funding in regular order and to make congress work better for the American people. Highlights of the legislation include:

- **Biennial Budget Resolutions:** Establishes a biennial budget process by requiring budget resolutions to cover at least two years, or a biennium, while maintaining annual appropriations. Specifically, the budget resolution would provide two years of allocations to the Committees on Appropriations, which would then provide topline discretionary spending levels for each fiscal year of a biennium.
- **Annual Reconciliation:** Preserves annual reconciliation under a biennial budget.
- **Congressional Budget Completion Date:** Amends the *Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974* to require Congress to complete action on the concurrent resolution on or before May 1 of each odd-numbered year.
- **Annual Supplemental Budget Submission:** Requires the Executive Branch to submit an Annual Supplemental Budget, which includes prior- and current-year fiscal data and credit re-estimates for the current year, separate from the President's policy proposals, no later than December 1 of each calendar year. This will allow for additional time to develop the Congressional Budget Office's baseline, Congress's budget resolution, and various appropriations bills.
- **House Budget Committee Membership:** Recommends the repeal of required term limits for service on the House Budget Committee beginning in the 116th Congress.
- **Fiscal State of the Nation:** Requires the Budget Committees of the House and Senate to hold a biennial, joint hearing with testimony from the Comptroller General of the United States regarding the audited financial statement of the Executive Branch.
- **Tax Expenditures:** Includes total combined outlays and revenues for tax expenditures as an optional item in the budget resolution to provide greater transparency in the federal budget.

THE BUDGET PROCESS IS NOT WORKING

Source: CRS

176	# of CRs passed by Congress since 1977
3	# of fiscal years since 1955 in which <i>not one</i> CR was enacted
19	# of the <i>Federal Government shutdowns</i> since 1977

While this legislation is not a silver bullet, it includes the proven bipartisan reforms developed by the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform and begins to take steps necessary to improve the federal funding process.