



## Touted Savings in Spending Proposals Misleading

According to the Congressional Budget Office, attempts by Senate Democrats to cut spending have been feeble and at times, misleading. Analysts at the CBO have determined that the Senate Democrats' plan for deficit reduction shows far less savings than that proposed by House Republicans.



Fox News reports:

While Senate Democrats and the White House are touting another \$6.5 billion in spending cuts in the midst of their fight with congressional Republicans over how best to reduce the deficit, CBO indicates in a 513-page report to Congress obtained by Fox that nearly \$2 billion of that is emergency funding. That is-spending that is not included in the budget and, therefore, does not affect the deficit.

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye of Hawaii (picture, above) will not dispute the CBO's claims but reported that his goal was to cut spending by \$51 billion, with President Obama's proposed budget as the base. Fox News explains, however, that of the \$51 billion, \$41 billion "was never enacted, so experts do not see that as a real cut."

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Democrats are not the only ones who employed a bit of trickery. The CBO has determined that Republicans cut \$61 billion in spending, and not the \$100 billion that they attempted to assert. Like the Democrats, the Republicans used President Obama's current budget as the base.

Once analysts cut to the real savings, however, Republicans have the Democrats beat by a mile, having proposed \$61 billion in savings versus the Democrats' \$8.7 billion.

Both the Democratic and Republican proposals are expected to be voted on today in the Senate. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced on Friday that he planned the head-to-head votes, and did not miss the opportunity to take a jab at the GOP plan.

Calling the GOP's proposed cuts "counterproductive," Reid said, "This will go down in history as probably one of the worst pieces of legislation that we've drafted in the history of this Congress."

In response, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell declared the Democrats' proposal to be "ludicrous," remarking, "They'd rather draw a line in the sand than agree to cut another dime in spending."

Both proposals are expected to fail, as they will likely not receive the 60 votes needed for passage.

The [Miami Herald](#) explains that the votes are intended by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid for



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symbolic purposes:

Democrats say the votes in the Senate would demonstrate to tea party-backed House GOP freshmen that their bill is a dead issue in the Senate, and that they need to move closer to their demands for smaller budget cuts.

Democratic Senator Dick Durbin asserts, "I'm sure that Speaker Boehner will be sitting down with his caucus and say, 'Well, what's our next position? Where do we go from here?'"

The Democrats seem to forget, however, that their own proposal is unlikely to get unanimous support from their own party, particularly from moderates who face reelection in 2012. One such Democrat, Claire McCaskill of Missouri, has already announced that the Democratic proposal "does not go far enough."

[News Hour](#) writes,

Neither proposal is likely to receive the 60 votes needed to clear a Senate procedural hurdle, which would leave the two parties just 10 days to bridge their \$50 billion divide, or be forced to adopt another temporary stopgap to fund the government, while lawmakers make another run at a long-term agreement.

The Republicans would not necessarily be disappointed with another temporary stopgap measure, as each extension moves Republicans closer to their \$61 billion in total cuts. Republican Representative Patrick McHenry has stated, "If we keep cutting \$4 billion every two weeks until the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30, that'll equal the \$60 billion in cuts that we've asked for in the House and I think that's a good deal."

White House press secretary Jay Carney has not yet indicated if the White House would approve another short-term funding measure when the current one expires on March 18, remarking, "I'm not going to draw a line in the sand on what we will or won't do."

He did, however, indicate that the administration believes it to be inefficient to operate on two-week deals, contending it is "not good for the economy and therefore a very bad idea."



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