



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 26, 2015

House Passes Budget Using Unusual Rule

House Republicans passed a budget on Wednesday after employing the very unusual “Queen of the Hill” rule. The budget that earned the most votes was the one dubbed “Price 2,” which matches the one passed in the House Budget panel last week but includes a \$20 billion increase in defense spending.



Faced with conflicting interests of fiscal conservatism and increased defense spending, Republican leaders in the House elected to use a parliamentary maneuver called “Queen of the Hill” which allowed the House to vote on multiple budgets. The one that secured the most votes is the one that is deemed to have passed.

In addition to the winning budget, the House voted on several others, including these: the original one that passed the House Budget panel, labeled “Price 1”; a more conservative budget that came out of the Republican Study Committee; a House Democratic budget, drafted by Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.); a liberal budget by the Progressive Caucus; and another from the Congressional Black Caucus.

The winning budget was ratified with a vote of 228-199. No Democrats supported it, and 17 Republicans opposed it.

The vote marks a win for so-called hawks, who advocated for increased military spending, while fiscal conservatives opposed the increase.

“I am curious how the self-proclaimed defense hawks claim to defend our country when our credit is shot and our debt service is approaching \$1 trillion a year,” said Representative Tom McClintock (R-Calif.), who led the opposition to the added military spending.

According to the *New York Times*, the budget would cut spending \$5.5 trillion over the next decade. Likewise, it includes parliamentary language called “reconciliation” that orders House committees to create legislation that would repeal ObamaCare. Under budget rules, the reconciliation repeal bill cannot be filibustered in the Senate and requires only a majority vote to pass, reports the *Times*. Regarding the proposed “spending cuts,” it must be noted, these usually refer to cuts in *automatic increases*, not actual cuts. So the rate of spending often doesn’t technically go down, it just doesn’t go up as much.

House Republicans claim their budget would yield a surplus of \$13 billion in 2024 and \$33 billion in 2025.

The Senate will be conducting its own budget votes on Thursday and Friday, along with what the *Times* dubs “a free-for-all of unlimited amendments — some budget oriented, many politically loaded and none binding.”



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The passed budgets are non-binding, however, and do not require a presidential signature. As reported by MSNBC, once the House and Senate agree on a budget, lawmakers will have to re-draft legislation that reconciles the two versions.

If the Senate manages to pass its own budget in time, House and Senate Republicans will immediately work to reconcile the competing versions.

Democrats do not believe that the Republicans can overcome their divisions and pass a budget, however.

“I think [Republicans] will find it ultimately to be bad news because I think they will have great difficulty getting agreement with the Senate on their budget,” asserted Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.).

House Republicans have renewed the call to transform Medicare into a voucher-like program, while Senate Republicans did not mention that issue in their budget plan. Both the House and Senate budgets address an overhaul of the tax code.



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