



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 17, 2013

## Mixed Reactions to New Law Reopening Government

Once the 11th-hour vote to avoid the potential default was passed by the Senate and the House and signed into law by President Obama, key players in the just-ended game of fiscal chicken [began issuing](#) their justifications and frustrations.

That game, [variously called](#) “political brinkmanship,” a “temporary fix,” “a temporary ceasefire,” and “a political achievement for Obama,” does everything the president wanted while giving almost nothing away to the Republicans.

Government spending will continue into early next year, the debt ceiling debate has been postponed until early February, and as yet unnamed “negotiators” will have until December 15 to make recommendations on cutting government spending. The Republicans even lost a skirmish there, too, as “sequestration” is on the table for the negotiators’ discussion.

As David Espo, writing at Newsmax, expressed it: “The president outmaneuvered Republicans by holding firm in defense of Obamacare to win the agreement, with few strings attached.” In the House the defeat was resounding, with the Senate bill passing without modification, 285 to 144. Translation: 88 of the 232 House Republicans sided with all the House Democrats to pass the bill.

Justifications had to be made, especially since every member of the House is up for reelection next year. It was necessary that explanations be issued, and “clarifications” be spun. Rep. Charlie Dent (R-Pa.), who voted yes, was a prime example, although certainly not the only one. Sporting a dismal Freedom Index (FI) rating of just 45, Dent did the best he could: “This legislation must be supported, but it should not be celebrated. It’s not a win for anyone — not the Congress, nor the president.”

Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-Pa. with an FI of 69) [explained his yes vote](#): “I’ve been calling for the political brinkmanship to end, and I’m encouraged [that] there is a measure that could get to the president’s desk. Washington cannot continue to operate in perpetual crisis mode.”

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio and an FI of just 54), who also voted “yea,” was all for forgetting the past and moving on:

Our negotiating team will pursue real reforms that address the drivers of our debt [and] get control of spending [and] put us on a path to a balanced budget ... these negotiations are a big opportunity.

Those who voted “nay” in the House expressed disappointment and frustration. As Rep. Tom Price (R-Ga. and a FI of 72) put it: “There’s nothing historic about this agreement. It is the response to a crisis manufactured by the president and a Democratic Party [that is] content with the nation’s fiscal ruin.”





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Rep. Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas and an FI of 67) explained his “nay” vote:

Not only as a congressman but as the father of an 11-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son I cannot, in good conscience, support an unconditional increase in the national debt ceiling without any plan or commitment to begin dealing with the debt.

Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn. and an FI of 63) voted “nay” as well, explaining,

I cannot support the Senate proposal in its current form. House Republicans have fought to provide the same relief to hard-working Americans that the Obama administration has generously provided to unions and big business.

Rep. Paul Broun (R-Ga. and an FI of 90) said he voted no because “The Senate-negotiated deal does nothing to stop ObamaCare.... Anything less than a delay or a full defund is a letdown for the American people.”

Over in the Senate, Republicans were equally busy justifying their support of the bill that became law. Said Senator John Thune (R-S.D. and a FI rating of 56) who is chairman of the Senate Republican Conference: “This isn’t a perfect proposal but ... it will force Congress to have a broad debate about Washington’s dangerous levels of spending and debt.”

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C. and an FI of 63), who is up for reelection in 2014, provided plenty of ammunition for his primary opponent:

To say we as Republicans left a lot on the table would be one of the biggest understatements in American political history. We could have done much, much better.

Unfortunately ... this agreement was the best [Senate Minority Leader Mitch] McConnell could do. By the time we got to this point, we were playing poker only holding a pair of twos.

Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas and an FI of 90), who fulfilled his vow to vote no, [was much more direct](#): “This is a terrible deal. This deal embodies everything about the Washington establishment that frustrates the American people.”

This deal kicks the can down the road. It allows yet more debt, more deficits, more spending, and it does absolutely nothing to provide relief for the millions of Americans who are hurting because of ObamaCare.

Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah also with an FI of 90) vented his frustration about the establishment as well:

On Wednesday the establishment did what it does best — maintain the status quo, avoid tough votes and kick the can of hard decisions further down the road — all at the expense of the American people.

Unfortunately, Obamacare has been funded, big business and those with influence have been exempted from it, the debt limit has been increased and, sadly, the faith of the American people in their elected officials has decreased.

In summarizing the sellout, writer Thomas Eddlem of *The New American* [observed](#),

Only in America are [those] who want to balance the budget and make raising the national debt limit unnecessary labeled “terrorists” and those who want to raise the national credit card limit to infinity deemed “reasonable.”

Edward Klein, the author of [The Amateur: Barack Obama in the White House](#), knows exactly where the



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“terrorist” label came from: someone whom the media failed to mention in the aftermath of the Republican surrender. Known as “The Night Stalker” because she is the only presidential aide allowed to spend much time in the family quarters, Valerie Jarrett, [according to Klein](#),

convinced the president that a government shutdown and default offered a great opportunity to demonize the Republicans and help the Democrats win back a majority in the House of Representatives in 2014.

Valerie came [up] with the idea of using the words “hostage” and “ransom” and “terrorists” against the Republicans.

[She told the president] do not cooperate one iota on Obamacare. Don’t give an inch. Let the Republicans stew in their own juice.

The real problem revealed by the defeat of the Republicans in the faceoff over ObamaCare and out-of-control government spending is that there are too many establishment types and too few true Americanists in Congress who understand what’s at stake. As Senator Ted Cruz explained [in an interview](#) following the vote on Wednesday,

We saw the House of Representatives take a courageous stand, listening to the American people....

That was a remarkable victory, to see the House engage in a profile of courage.

Unfortunately the Senate chose not to follow the House.... That was unfortunate. [If] the Senate Republicans had united and supported House Republicans, the outcome of this, I believe, would have been very, very different.

One lesson to be drawn from the confrontation may be this: At the moment there just simply aren’t enough Americanists in Congress, such as Cruz and Lee, with the courage to confront the establishment. The strategy would have worked. All it would have taken is just a little more backbone in the Senate and the House.

Photo of U.S. senators before vote to end shutdown: AP Images

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