



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 19, 2010

Reid and McConnell Compromise on Short-Term Spending Bill

[UPI.com](#) explains, "That means the new Congress, with a Republican majority in the House, will have to move quickly to work on appropriations on the rest of the fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30."

The fiscal year began on October 1, 2010 but Congress failed to pass any of its regular annual spending bills, thereby necessitating several continuing resolutions.

[Fox News](#) writes, "According to the Congressional Research Service, continuing resolutions, designed to prevent the government from running out of money for daily operations and forcing a shutdown, have been used every year but three since 1978."



On Saturday, President Obama signed a continuing resolution that will fund the government through Tuesday, December 21. The previous continuing resolution was scheduled to expire on Sunday night.

The [Associated Press](#) reports that passing the short-term compromise resolution by Reid and McConnell "would prevent the government from running out of money for daily operations and forcing a shutdown."

Earlier this month, the House of Representatives passed a \$1.1 trillion continuing resolution by a vote of 212-206, which virtually froze 2011 "discretionary" appropriations at the current level until September 2011. The bill also included the Food Safety Modernization Act.

The continuing resolution then moved to the Senate for a vote, where it became a 1,900-page omnibus bill laden with earmarks. A passage vote was expected to take place in the Senate last week.

On Thursday night, however, Senator Reid reluctantly [pulled](#) the omnibus bill from the Senate floor after fierce opposition from Republicans. Republicans, reportedly angered by the bill's expense and rushed pace, had announced that they would force a full reading of every single paragraph of the bill in order to run out the clock on the lame-duck session.

Confronted by the Republicans' delay tactics to kill the bill, as well as a retraction of support from the few Republicans who supported the bill, Senator Reid elected to pull the contentious bill in favor of a short-term, less controversial one.

Republican leaders view Reid's concession as a victory, and point to their actions against the omnibus bill as an indication of their determination to remain fiscally responsible. Republican Representative John Boehner of Ohio emphasized, "Beginning in January, the House is going to become the outpost in Washington for the American people and their desire for a smaller, less costly and more accountable government." However, the size and cost of the federal government cannot be reduced without rolling



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back the unconstitutional programs that have been created and then sustained and expanded over the years with the help of Republicans as well as Democrats. Holding the line on, or even slightly reducing, the amount of "discretionary" spending will not, for instance, reverse the overall growth of the federal budget as long as "mandatory" spending (which comprises most of the federal budget) is left untouched by Congress. Nor can federal spending be reduced in the absolute sense merely by cutting the projected rate of growth, or merely by eliminating pork barrel spending (it's a small part of the total budget). If the new Republican leadership is serious about actually reducing the size and cost of government, what unconstitutional programs will they start phasing out and/or eliminating?

Passage of the short-term spending compromise would mean that the new Congress that convenes in January would need to pass another appropriations bill to finance the government for the rest of the fiscal year. That's a good thing, since, unlike the current lame-duck Congress, that's the Congress that was elected in November. [The Hill](#) indicates, however, that the compromise is not yet final: "A Senate Democratic aide, however, said a deal is not final and 'there are still outstanding issues.'"

Photo: Harry Reid



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