



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 22, 2018

Republican House Passes Mammoth Budget-busting Omnibus Spending Bill

The House of Representatives has voted for the Omnibus spending bill, averting a government shutdown (when the Senate goes along), and piling even more debt on the backs of the American people.



“The House just voted to rebuild our military, secure our borders, and give our service members their largest pay raise in eight years,” House Speaker Paul Ryan said after [the vote of 256-167 in the House in favor of the Omnibus spending package](#). The bill now goes to the Senate, which will need to pass it before Saturday to avoid a “government shutdown.” Of course, its in Ryan’s interest to make the legislation he supports sound appealing to his Republican base. In reality, the bipartisan bill also included spending intended to win Democrat support.

“Tax and Tax, spend and spend, elect and elect,” was a quotation from the the New Deal era attributed to Harry Hopkins, a top aide to President Franklin Roosevelt. It turns out that, while the quotation could sum up the Roosevelt administration, he probably never said it. With the House of Representatives passing a \$1.3 trillion, 2,232-page omnibus spending bill Thursday, the quotation is now better put into the mouths of the Republican leadership in the House.

Representative Mo Brooks (R-Ala.) responded, “This year we’re looking at a deficit of \$750 billion to \$1 trillion. Next year, the estimate is \$1 trillion or more. I have to wonder if there is any way that we can avoid a national insolvency or bankruptcy.”

The bill is so bad that even Rep. Jared Polis, a Democrat from Colorado, condemned it. “I would say there is a lot to find in this bill we can cut. And if we haven’t cut that, we haven’t done our work. This is no way to run a country.”

Polis was specifically responding to Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.), the chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, who claimed that “not a dollar is wasted.” President Donald Trump, however, seemed unhappy with the bill, arguing that he had to “waste money on Dem giveaways” so he could get his own increases in defense spending.

This is similar to the days of the Reagan administration, when the president accepted increases in



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domestic spending — to please the Democrats — in order to get their votes in favor of increasing defense spending. However, there are two huge differences in those days and now. Back in the 1980s, it was at the height of the Cold War, and the Democrats had control of the House of Representatives.

Today, Republicans control the House and there is no Cold War to contend with — and yet, the spending goes on. In fact, it is increasing. As Veronique de Rugy, senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, asserted, “Let’s face it; they know that when Republicans are in power, they can act like a drunken teenager with Daddy’s credit card, but they sober up when they have the gavel.”

Republicans hold the majority in both the House and the Senate, and have a Republican sitting in the White House. But, as House Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) told Breitbart News Daily earlier this week, “Senate Democrats seem to be calling most of the shots.”

Congressman John Yarmuth (D-Ky.) seemed quite happy with the deal. “We got about 80 percent of what we were trying to get.”

Republican Jim Jordan of Ohio, a member of the House Freedom Caucus, did not seem as pleased, lamenting, “Planned Parenthood, Gateway Bridge [a spending project in New York favored by Senate Democrat Leader Chuck Schumer], Planned Parenthood, trillion dollar deficit, and no [border] wall.”

In fact, the Democrats appear so pleased with the “compromise” that they are for it, despite it not including amnesty for illegal aliens under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Senator Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) explained, “We’re not going to have a shutdown ... We have to move on a bipartisan basis.”

The consequences to the bill staggering. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget notes that the deficit for 2018 will be around \$800 billion. As de Rugy said in her article, “Larger deficits also mean larger interest payments. A CRFB analysis found that ‘interest payments will quadruple, topping \$1 trillion per year in as little as a decade. That’s more than we will spend each year on the military or Medicaid, *and as a share of the economy, it is the highest in history.*” (Emphasis added). “Over the next decade, we’ll spend around \$7 trillion (\$55,000 per household) just servicing our debt.”

The *Daily Caller*, citing a GOP aide as a source, reported that the spending bill will fund Planned Parenthood, ObamaCare subsidies, gun control legislation, sanctuary cities, and possibly also a large Internet sales tax.

The 2,232-page bill is simply too large for the representatives to have actually read it from the time it was given to House members until they voted on it. Lawmakers would have had to have read nearly 200 pages an hour to read the entire bill. Even Massachusetts Democrat Jim McGovern said it was “a lousy way to do business.” He predicted earlier this week, “I have no idea what’s in this thing,” warning that he would not be surprised that some unexpected provisions will come to light in the next few weeks.

This is reminiscent of Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) who argued in 2010 that ObamaCare needed to be passed “so we’ll know what’s in it.” Now, Republicans are adopting the same Pelosi tactic with the budget.

How did we get into this situation? First of all, far too many members of Congress have long ignored the fact that the only things they can legally spend money on are those things authorized in the U.S. Constitution. While it would be commendable for members of Congress to avoid “waste,” the more serious problem is that they do not follow the Constitution.



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This is why a “Balanced Budget Amendment” is really not the answer to the problem. The problem is spending on unconstitutional appropriations. If Congress restricted itself to spending on only those matters authorized in the Constitution, then the budget would be easily balanced.

Another problem is that the budget process has been flawed for many years. As Bill Hahn, the vice president of operations for The John Birch Society (parent organization of *The NewAmerican*), explained recently, instead of lumping everything into one huge and loudly touted “must pass” omnibus appropriations bill, “Congress is supposed to be passing 12 budget resolutions that originate from a request from the president, which is supposed to happen every February. Then Congress debates these and passes them. However, this is only for the discretionary portion of spending, which amounts to about \$1.2 or 1.3 trillion.”

These 12 budget resolutions are supposed to be passed by October in time for the upcoming “fiscal” year. However, as Hahn elaborated, in the last 40 years, “Congress has passed only four of these bills on time. One in the last 20 years! When bills are not passed on time, Congress comes up with stop-gap measures known as Continuing Resolutions. When they wait too long, then they pile a bunch of these Continuing Resolutions into an Omnibus bill.”

And this is why we have the mess now, where members of Congress are told they must pass the entire spending package without even reading it, to “avoid a government shutdown.” They promise that they will do better “next time,” but they never do. It is much like the old Peanuts cartoon, when Lucy kept pulling the football away just as the naïve Charlie Brown tried to kick it.

In this case, Lucy is the leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties in Congress, and the American people are Charlie Brown. We laugh at the naivete of poor Charlie Brown, but the looming financial calamity facing America is no laughing matter.



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