



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 1, 2011

House Avoids Government Shutdown; Senate Expected to Do the Same

Moments ago, the United States House of Representatives voted 335 to 91 in favor of passing another Continuing Resolution to continue to fund the federal government, which will prevent a government shutdown on March 4, when the former CR was set to expire. The newly passed Continuing Resolution will fund the federal government through March 18, allowing Congress more time to reach a compromise on the federal budget for the fiscal year ending on September 30.



Prior to the final vote, the House voted on an amendment proposed by Representative William Keating that would eliminate taxpayer-funded subsidies to oil companies, a measure that failed by a vote of 176 to 249.

The Continuing Resolution now moves to the Senate for a vote. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid indicated early today that Senate Democrats will approve the House Republicans two-week extension of government funding, ignoring a request from the White House for a month-long stopgap funding bill.

The [Huffington Post](#) explains:

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney hinted at the reasoning during an early morning briefing where he talked about the economic uncertainty that could arise by funding the government in two-week aliquots.

An administration official, speaking about internal thinking on the condition of anonymity, added that the president and his team were also concerned that two additional weeks would not be long enough for lawmakers to resolve their differences over a long-term CR to fund the government through the rest of the fiscal year.

However, House Republicans remained skeptical about the proposed 30-day stopgap. House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said of the proposal: If ands and buts were candies and nuts then wed all have a merry Christmas. If there had been a conversation about this 10 days ago, or even two days ago, then we might have had something to talk about. But the fact is that we were forced to move on our own. I think were taking a responsible path forward to keep the government open and to meet our commitment to cut spending.

In the end, House Republicans insisted that the adaptation of the longer resolution would necessitate further cuts in order to garner Republican support. The lack of time, however, prevented further discussions on the matter.



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As a result, the House passed a two-week Continuing Resolution that cuts \$4 billion from current spending levels. Many of the cuts are from programs that President Obama has called for eliminating and the rest of the savings comes from ending the practice of earmarks.

Of the cuts limited to programs Obama targeted for elimination, Reid responded, We are encouraged to hear that Republicans are abandoning their demands for extreme measures like cuts to border security, cancer research, and food safety inspectors and instead moving closer to Democrats position that we should cut government spending in a smart, responsible way that targets waste and excess while keeping our economy growing.

This afternoon, Reid admitted that passing continuing resolution after continuing resolution is a terrible way to govern. He quickly blamed the Republicans however, asserting that they have been unwilling to compromise. The only message that we have from the Republicans is to wipe out programs that are so important to people, especially people that cant help themselves.

Last month, the House approved a spending bill that cut \$61 billion from 2010 spending levels, but the legislation was rejected by President Obama and Senate Democrats, who did not offer cuts of their own.

However, as the two sides cannot reach an agreement on spending cuts, House Republicans have raised the possibility of cutting week by week.

Republican Representative Patrick McHenry explains, If we keep cutting \$4 billion every two weeks until the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30, thatll equal \$60 billion in cuts that weve asked for in the House and I think thats a good deal.

Democratic Senator Kent Conrad disagrees. Honestly, I think this two-week business is not the way to go. I think there should be a longer-term agreement, hopefully through the end of the year.

The [Washington Times](#) notes, however, that historically, the number of interim resolutions this year has been relatively low. In 2000, for example, Congress passed 21 interim extensions, while this weeks is the only the fifth extension of this fiscal year.

The debate over the proposed cuts in the fiscal year budget ranges widely. Mark Zandi, a chief economist at Moodys Analytics, wrote a memo indicating that the Republican spending cuts would cause the loss of 700,000 jobs by the year 2012.

By contrast, however, John B. Taylor of the Hoover Institute contends that Moodys job loss figures are contrary to basic economics, experience, and facts.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell indicates that the federal government has been running entirely inefficiently. We have added \$3 trillion to the debt under the Obama administration while we have lost 3 million jobs. That is not the way to govern.

Photo: House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio, left, and House Majority Leader Eric Cantor of Va., during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, March 1, 2011: AP Images



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