



House GOP Defeats Spending Bill in Shocking 230-195 Vote

On Wednesday, the U.S. House of Representatives rejected a stopgap spending bill that would have funded the federal government through mid-November while also providing \$3.7 billion for disaster relief. Conservative House members rejected the bill in a shocking 230 to 195 defeat.

While Democrats rejected the bill because of the spending cuts to a government loan program to help car companies build fuel-efficient vehicles, conservatives in the GOP felt that the bill in fact cut too little and spent too much.



The failed stopgap bill would have funded the federal government through November 18, permitting lawmakers yet more time to reach an agreement for the 2012 budget year.

GOP leadership in the House forged ahead with the vote on Wednesday, uncertain of the outcome. When it became clear during the roll call vote that the bill would fail, Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy approached three leading Republican conservatives in the chamber in the hopes of convincing them to switch their votes in support of the measure. However, Republican Study Committee Chairman Jim Jordan (pictured above) of Ohio, Joe Walsh of Illinois, and Jason Chaffetz of Utah all remained unmoved.

Two more House Republicans who were absent would likely have voted against the bill, given their history for fiscal conservatism.. Both GOP presidential hopefuls, Texas Congressman Ron Paul and Minnesota Representative Michele Bachmann, [missed](#) the vote on Wednesday in order to take part in presidential campaign-related activities.

Paul, in particular, has been an adamant [opponent](#) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), asserting that federal disaster relief is bad economics, bad morality, and bad constitutional law. It is very unlikely he would have voted in favor of a bill to assign even more money to an agency which he contends is a great contributor to deficit financing.

Congressional Quarterly remarked on the significance of the outcome: The decisive outcome, a 195-230 rejection of the measure, delivered a stunning and painful message. After nearly nine months in the majority, House GOP leaders still cannot count on their conference to work effectively as a unit. Particularly telling is that House Speaker John Boehner proved unable to sway even members of his own state delegation, as three other Ohio Republicans Jim Jordan, Steve Austria, and Michael Turner voted against the measure as well.

Majority Whip McCarthy did manage to convince Dan Burton of Indiana to support the bill, but when it became clear that the bill would fail, Burton switched back to a negative vote.

As a result of the bills failure to pass, Congressional leaders must start over and formulate a measure that will prevent the government from shutting down at the end of next week, and also keep the



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governments disaster relief program from running out of money early next week.

Fox News [reports](#):

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has only a few days' worth of aid remaining in its disaster relief fund, lawmakers said Wednesday. The agency has already held up thousands of longer-term rebuilding projects repairs to sewer systems, parks, roads and bridges, for example to conserve money to provide emergency relief to victims of recent disasters.

If House Republicans do not yield on disaster relief funding, the bill will likely face confrontation in the Senate, which could force a government shutdown at the end of the week. As it stands now, however, the bill does not have a chance of passing in the House without additional spending cuts.

Republicans should be familiar with this territory, however, as they found themselves in a similar predicament in July. *Congressional Quarterly* writes:

Facing a similar choice in late July, when conservatives balked at his debt limit proposal, Boehner bowed to GOP conservatives, although their demand for congressional endorsement of a balanced-budget constitutional amendment appeared to be a non-starter with Democrats. The House passed a new version of Boehners bill, but the debt limit and deficit reduction stalemate was settled and default averted through negotiations with the White House.

However, this particular instance may prove to be more difficult for the House Speaker. During past votes, the loss of support among fiscal conservatives was balanced by a gain in support from House Democrats, as in the case of the debt ceiling vote. With this bill, however, House Democrats were not inclined to support the bill because it included disaster aid.



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