



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 19, 2018

Rand Paul Explains Why He Won't Vote to Extend Government Funding

The nation faces a government shutdown as of midnight, January 19, if senators do not approve a budget bill passed by the House by a 230-197 vote on Thursday night to extend funding until next month. While the battle is generally perceived as mostly between Republicans in favor of passing a budget and Democrats who are opposed to it unless a provision is added to save the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, a handful of Republicans — Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, Jeff Flake, of Arizona, and Rand Paul, of Kentucky — are also opposed to the bill. However, the three oppose the bill for different reasons.



Graham said he is opposed to the short-term spending bill, also known as a continuing resolution or CR, because he wants more military spending and an immigration deal, which is basically what Democrats are also looking for.

“I’m not going to vote for a CR,” Graham told reporters on January 17. “I want to be fair to the DACA population. I want to begin to fix a broken immigration system. But above all else I want to rebuild the military that’s in a great decline.... And there is no way in the world to fix this problem without dealing with the DACA issue.”

The House bill passed on the 18th would fund the government until February 16, but it doesn’t include a solution ahead of the DACA deadline on March 5. Neither does it include a full-year budget for the military.

Flake is, for all practical purposes, in the Democrats’ corner. He said late on Thursday that he was “not inclined” to vote for a short-term spending measure because leaders did not keep their promise to hold a vote by the end of January on legal protections for young illegal aliens — the so-called “Dreamers” protect under DACA. The next morning, he said he preferred Democrats’ proposal of a mini-funding extension to allow more time for negotiations, an idea GOP leaders rejected the day before.

Paul, a senator who is popular among libertarians and constitutional conservatives, spoke with Neil Cavuto, the host of Fox’s *Your World with Neil Cavuto*, on January 18 and explained his reasons for opposing the spending bill. Cavuto observed, “Democrats are already crowing about the reality that votes are simply not there [to pass the budget bill]. And it’s not only the number of no votes on their side, but the number of no votes on the Republican side, including this prominent one, Kentucky Republican Senator Rand Paul.”

Cavuto then asked Paul why he would be a “no” vote. Paul replied:



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Well, you know, I think government spends too much money. Our debt this year or our deficit this year will be close to \$800 billion.

Next year, it's projected to be a trillion. So, for decades now, you have heard of Congress putting spending caps in place, self-imposed rules to try to get spending under control.

Well, this spending bill will exceed those caps. One of the caps were called pay-go caps. And we put them in a place a dozen years ago. And I think we have exceeded them, I don't know, 700 times, 29 times in the last couple years.

So, really, if we say we're fiscally conservative, we ought to be fiscally conservative. So I'm just not voting to exceed the spending caps, and I'm not voting for \$700 billion deficits annually.

Paul was especially tough on the common practice in Congress in recent years to pass "continuing resolutions" that combine appropriations for multiple government departments instead of carefully examining the spending for each department individually to determine if it is warranted. He told Cavuto:

Well, it's a terrible way to run your government. They call it continuing resolutions....

And to me, that means continuing an abdication of our duty to actually spend the money department by department.

So, we have 12 different departments of government. They have appropriation bills. We have done that four times in 40 years. It's fiscally irresponsible to glom it all together and say, oh, my hair is on fire, there's a deadline, we have to just vote for it....

That stuff goes on year after year after year. It never goes away, because no one takes the time to specifically look at the money spent. It's glommed together in trillion-dollar bills. And, frankly, I have had enough of it. And I think the American people have had enough with it.

If that means that we have got to close the place down and restart it under better management, I'm all for that.

When Cavuto pointed out that Republicans are likely to be blamed if the government shuts down, Paul said:

I'm concerned about doing what is right, not about which party wins this, because, frankly, this particular time, I will vote with more Democrats. Yesterday, I voted with more Democrats to try to protect American privacy from intelligence agencies snooping in your phone calls.

I don't care which party presents it, frankly. I am who I am. I said who I was. I'm not for debt. I'm not for higher taxes. I'm for smaller government and I'm for more American privacy. And I'm just going to vote whichever way that falls. But it really isn't, for me, a partisan issue.

Paul's reference to voting with Democrats to protect Americans' privacy pertained to the Senate's passage by 65-34 on January 18 of a bill (S. 139) that included a six-year extension with minimal changes to the National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance program. For a record of the vote, click [here](#).)

The law, known as Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), allows the NSA to collect text messages and e-mails of foreigners abroad without an individualized warrant, even when they communicate with Americans in the United States.



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As we write, a budget deal in the Senate still has not been worked out. The most recent report we have read, at 2:45 pm EST on Friday, stated that Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said he and President Trump have made “some progress” in a private meeting about keeping the government open but did not strike a final deal.

“We have a good number of disagreements,” Schumer told reporters at the Capitol upon returning from the White House. “Discussions will continue.”

Most news reports portray the prospect of a government shutdown as something ominous that must be avoided at all costs, even if it means having Congress approve a trillion-dollar deficit. However, we are inclined to share Senator Paul’s view that if “we have got to close the place down and restart it under better management, I’m all for that.”

Photo: AP Images

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