



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 12, 2013

Ryan-Murray Debt Deal Gives Away Sequester Cuts, Sells Out Conservatives

In announcing the budget agreement hashed out during secret negotiations over the past two weeks, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), shown, [said](#): “I’m proud of this agreement. It reduces the deficit without raising taxes. And it cuts spending in a smarter way. It’s a firm step in the right direction.”



This was for public consumption. In fact, if the agreement passes the House in its present form, it will increase government discretionary spending, add back about two-thirds of the automatic “sequester” cuts negotiated in 2011, and raise taxes (called “fees” by Ryan) on travelers, Medicare suppliers, and some government employees. What Ryan has done is negotiate away [the only real bargaining chip the Republicans had](#) that has worked: the sequester. His bill is being sold, once again, as providing spending now in exchange for promises of cuts in the future. It breaks the promises made [when the sequester was initiated](#) that it would remain in place until serious cuts in entitlement spending were enacted.

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[Ryan is now the pragmatist:](#)

We know that this budget agreement doesn’t come close to achieving what we want to achieve on our ultimate fiscal goals. But again, if we can get a step in the right direction, we’re going to take that step, and that’s why we’re doing this.

As a conservative, I deal with the situation as it exists. I deal with the way things are, not necessarily the way I want them to be.

I’ve passed three budgets in a row that reflect my priorities and my principles and everything I wanted to accomplish. We’re in divided government. I realize I’m not going to get that.

Almost from the moment Ryan spoke, those whom he sold out were quick to respond. Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.) wrote on his Facebook page: “Republicans will agree to more spending and, in exchange, Republicans will get higher taxes.” Rep. Jim Jordan (R- Ohio) [said in an interview](#) that Ryan and the establishment Republican leadership sacrificed “their biggest point of leverage” in order to get a short-term deal done before the end of the year while ignoring the red-ink bleeding from entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare. He added:



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I am against [the deal] just from the basic point that we embarked on a position at the beginning of the year that said: ‘We will keep the sequester [cuts] in place unless we get to make changes on mandatory spending that will save those programs and put the budget on path to balance within the next 10 years.

Rep. Raul Labrador (R-Utah) [said](#) that Ryan sold out principle to expediency: “I think it’s a terrible plan. I think it undoes everything we set out [to do].... I think it violates every principle we talked about.... [Ryan’s plan] makes promises to the American people that are false.”

Rep. Matt Salmon (R-Ariz.) agreed: “With the cuts we’ve done to spending over the last two years ... watching those go up in smoke is disheartening.... We [had] incredible leverage with sequestration.”

Salmon has joined with two other House members unhappy with the Ryan-Murray agreement — Reps. Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.) and Steve Scalise (R-La.) — [in circulating a letter](#) to representatives unhappy with the Ryan sell-out, stating in part:

With their own popularity cratering along with that of Obamacare, one can understand why the Democrats would want the diversion of another government shutdown.

We are not interested in giving the Democrats that opportunity.... Toward that end we encourage you to vote on a full-year ... funding bill at the levels established in law by the Budget Control Act.

The Budget Control Act [which created the sequester cuts] is the law of the land. Our Democrat colleagues are now threatening to shut the government down in order to change that.

We should not permit that to happen.

Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) doesn’t support the bill: “I cannot support a budget that raises taxes and never balances, nor can I support a deal that does nothing to reduce our nation’s \$17.3 trillion debt.”

Political action committees are also lining up against Ryan’s plan. Americans for Prosperity issued a statement accusing “congressional Republicans [of] joining liberal Democrats in breaking their word to the American people” while Heritage Action said the Ryan deal “would increase spending in the near term [in exchange] for promises of woefully inadequate long term reductions.” Brent Bozell, head of the conservative group ForAmerica, [added](#): “The conservative base of the Republican Party was already walking away from the establishment GOP. That will now turn into a stampede away from a party that has lost its principles and bearings.”

The president for the Club for Growth, Chris Chocola, agreed that the political ramifications if the Ryan-Murray compromise is passed [would be sizable](#): “If Republicans work with Democrats to pass this deal, it should surprise no one when Republican voters seek alternatives who actually believe in less spending when they go to the ballot box [in November].”

On the surface, the Ryan-Murray compromise is minuscule compared to the enormous federal budget: less than \$100 million versus \$3.8 trillion. But the underlying principle being sold out in the name of expediency is vital. As Wayne Brough, vice president of research at FreedomWorks expressed it:

The Ryan-Murray budget deal does nothing to tackle the \$17.3 trillion federal deficit and offers only [future] promises to address the mounting costs of entitlement spending...

The debate is much larger. It is about maintaining the only source of fiscal discipline that has emerged for some time in Washington.

Real spending cuts, however small, should not be traded away for promises of sweeping reforms



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sometime in the future.

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