

House and Senate Spending Bills – Appropriations & Continuing Resolutions

The House and Senate are undertaking the huge task of passing twelve appropriations bills to fund the federal government for Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24). These bills set the amount of money allocated to each federal agency and often contain language restricting the ways that money can be spent. It is unlikely that Congress will pass all 12 bills by the time the new fiscal year starts on October 1, 2023. If the deadline lapses, there are two options: either the government “shuts down” until an agreement is reached, or Congress passes a continuing resolution (CR) that extends funding for a short time. Adding to the pressure is the fact that the debt limit deal passed in the spring said that if Congress fails to pass the spending bills into law by Jan. 1, 2024, an across-the-board 1% reduction in spending for the year would kick in at the end of April. This puts pressure on members to reach an agreement even if it means they give in on issues important to the grassroots.

The conservative House Freedom Caucus (HFC) is pressuring Speaker McCarthy to reject any CR that “continues Democrats' bloated COVID-era spending.” They point out that a “clean” CR would lock in “the current FY 2023 spending level grossly increased by the lame-duck December 2022 omnibus spending bill.” They have pledged to only support a spending bill if it:

- Includes the House-passed "Secure the Border Act of 2023" (H.R. 2)
- Addresses the unprecedented weaponization of the Justice Department and FBI
- Ends the Left's woke policies in the Pentagon
- Does NOT contain any blank check for Ukraine in any supplemental appropriations

Eagle Forum is supporting the HFC’s effort to prevent Congress from reverting “to its old playbook of using a series of short-term funding extensions designed to push Congress up against a December deadline to force the passage of yet another monstrous, budget busting, pork filled, lobbyist handout omnibus spending bill at year’s end.”

The following departments are funded through the appropriations process:

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| • Agriculture (Ag) | • Labor, Health, and Human Services (LHHS) |
| • Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) | • Legislative Branch |
| • Defense (DOD) | • Military Construction and Veterans Affairs (MilConVA) |
| • Energy and Water (E&W) | • State and Foreign Operations (SFOPS) |
| • Financial Services | • Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) |
| • Homeland Security (DHS) | |
| • Interior (DOI) | |

House

The House has passed all but two appropriations bills through committee totaling \$1.59 trillion. This amount is the “cap” or ceiling that Biden and Congress agreed upon during the debt ceiling fight, it is not the floor. Congress can and should spend less. For example, the Appropriations committee has rescinded \$115 billion in unspent funds but is relocating that money to other programs. The following are the funding restrictions in the current House bills we are asking Congress to maintain:

Life

- End mail-in order chemical abortion drugs (Ag).
- Prohibition on implementing Biden administration rule allowing abortions in veterans hospitals (MilConVA).
- Prohibition on funding for abortion travel (DOD).
- Ensure federal funding does not promote overseas abortions (SFOPS).
- Prevent implementation of D.C.'s Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Act that forces organizations to participate in abortions (SFOPS).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Critical Race Theory (CRT)

- Prevent funds from implementing Biden's Executive Order 13985 that orders all agencies to eliminate policies that have a "disparate impact" on employees based on their race on gender (all departments).
- Prohibit funding of the promotion of CRT activities (all departments).

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

- Prohibit federal funding of gender transition procedures (CJS, DOD, LHHS, DHS, and MilConVA).
- Defund and prevent all drag shows (DOD and SFOPS).
- Prohibit flags being flown from federal buildings other than American, state, and military flags (Ag, DOD, DOI, MilConVA, SFOPS, and THUD).
- Defund the Gender Equity and Equality Action fund as well as prohibit government agencies from promoting or performing gender transition procedures on minors (SFOPS).
- Protect individuals and organizations who believe marriage is between one man and one woman (all departments).

Immigration

- Provide funding for border wall and enforcement via Border Patrol Agents (DHS).
- Eliminate catch-and-release by prohibiting release of illegal aliens into the United States (DHS).
- Prohibit funds for abortions or gender reassignment procedures (DHS).

*Although the House appropriations bills have some conservative immigration priorities, we encourage lawmakers to include all policies within H.R. 2, the *Secure the Border Act* such as ending the catch-and-release program, tightening asylum loopholes, prosecuting visa overstays, requiring E-Verify for new hires, and more.

Environmental, Social, and Governance Investments (ESG)

- Prohibit funding the Department of Labor's rule allowing fund managers to only invest their clients' money into companies that adopt "woke" policies (LHHS and CJS).

Senate

The Senate has passed all twelve bills out of committee totaling *\$1.8 trillion*. The Senate appropriations bills do not contain all the funding restrictions that are in the House bills. While there is nothing at this point that is glaringly egregious, many amendments will be offered on the

Senate floor that we should keep an eye on. The following types of amendments should be **opposed**:

- Declassification of marijuana on a federal level or allowance of cannabis banking.
- Elimination of pro-life protections that prohibit federal funding or forced participation in abortions.
- Promotion of chemical abortion drugs through telehealth and mail.
- Adoption of mask or vaccine mandates.

The Senate should support all House bills as well by offering amendments to include the above House language as well as reduced funding levels.