

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association



FY 2013 Funding Bill Passes

This issue of *Public Policy Notes* has been held for release until we could report out the status of deliberations on a funding bill or Continuing Resolution for FY 2013.

On Wednesday, March 20, 2013, the U.S. Senate passed a funding bill that was designed to avoid a government shutdown and will keep the federal government funded through the remainder of FY 2013 or September 30, 2013. The vote was 73-26 in favor of the bill.

The U.S. House took up the bill on Thursday,

March 21, 2013 and it was approved by a vote of 318-109. The bill was sent on its way to President Obama for his signature.

The passage of this bill averted a government shutdown that would have occurred on March 27 when the last continuing resolution expired.

The bill does not reverse the sequester budget cuts of \$85 billion but does provide flexibility for some agencies to institute those cuts by shifting

funds within their reduced budgets.

Upon passage of the funding bill, the Senate immediately opened debate on its first budget plan in four years and that plan was passed by the Senate on March 23, 2013.

The US House has adopted a budget that differs dramatically from the Senate version and the challenge will be to reconcile the two versions to find a budget that can pass both chambers. For more information about these budgets, go to pages 2 & 3.

The Continuing Resolution & Early Childhood

The National Women's Law Center (NWLC) issued a release on March 21, 2013 that noted that the Continuing Resolution passed for FY 2013 contained small early childhood increases.

These increases (known as anomalies) provide an additional \$50 million for

child care and \$33 million for Head Start.

These increases do not negate the sequester cuts but do alleviate some of the impact. The cuts to these programs will still occur, just not at the same level as previously anticipated.

NWLC is awaiting num-

bers from the Department of Health & Human Services on the number of children who can be served by these programs under the Continuing Resolution.

Source:
E-mail/3/21/13/Helen Blank/National Women's Law Center

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Need State Specific Advocacy

Information?

Go to the SECA website and click on "Our States" at the top of the home page. When the drop down menu appears, click on "State Advocacy Contacts" and select your state. You'll get immediate access to the information you're seeking. No more searching the web!

Foundation for Growth: Restoring the Promise of American Opportunity—The Senate Democratic Budget Plan

On March 14, 2013, the Senate Budget Committee passed a Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for FY 2014 by a vote of 12-10. (All ten Republicans voted against the resolution.)



According to **Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Committee Chair**, “The pro-growth budget plan we advanced today takes the bal-

anced and responsible approach to our fiscal and economic challenges that the American people expect and deserve....The Senate budget takes a very different approach than the plan proposed by House Republicans...Despite the significant differences in the approaches we have taken, I am hopeful that we can work together toward a balanced, responsible, and bipartisan deal.”

According to the information released by the Senate Budget Committee, the proposal:

- ◆ Replaces the cuts from sequestration with a balanced and responsible deficit reduction.
- ◆ Invests in long-term economic growth and national competitiveness by tackling our serious deficits in infrastructure, education, job training and innovation.
- ◆ Includes a \$100 billion targeted jobs and infrastructure package that is paid for by eliminating loopholes and cutting wasteful

spending in the tax code.

- ◆ Surpasses the bipartisan goal of \$4 trillion in 10-year deficit reduction, building on the \$2.4 trillion in deficit reduction already done for a total of \$4.2 trillion.
- ◆ Includes an equal mix of responsible spending cuts and new revenue.
- ◆ Achieves \$975 billion in spending cuts that includes: \$493 billion saved on the domestic spending side including \$275 billion in health care savings, \$240 billion saved by carefully and responsibly cutting defense spending to align with the drawdown of troops overseas, and \$242 billion in reduced interest payments.
- ◆ Preserves and protects Medicare and rejects calls to dismantle, privatize or voucherize Medicare.
- ◆ Protects the expansion of health insurance to nearly 30 million Americans and ensures that the federal partnership with Medicaid is preserved.
- ◆ Continues to make investments in national defense, homeland security, and law enforcement.
- ◆ Maintains promises made to our veterans.

The Republican response to the passage of the Concurrent Resolution by the Budget Committee



was provided by **Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama**. “Today was an important and clarifying day for Senators, the press, and the public.

This is the kind of meeting we should have been having all along—public, open process. We’d be in a much better position today if we hadn’t waited four years to do this work...I remain deeply disappointed that the majority’s proposal not only fails to change our debt course, but actually increases spending over the next 10 yearsOverall it produces \$7.3 trillion in new debt by 2023....As the budget moves to the (Senate) floor, Republicans will continue to outline an optimistic vision and to offer amendments to grow the economy, not the government.”

For a copy of the material that provided the basis for this article, go to

www.budget.senate.gov/democratic

You’ll find a summary of the Democratic budget plan, a copy of the full budget plan, legislative text and summary tables.

For the Republican response to the passage of the plan, go to

www.budget.senate.gov/republican

On March 23, 2013, after an all-night meeting, the Senate passed the budget plan by a 50-49 vote. Two Democrats from SECA states, Senator Mark Pryor (AR) and Senator Kay Hagan (NC) voted with all Senate Republicans against the plan. Two other Democrats also voted against the plan.

The Path to Prosperity: A Blueprint for American Renewal—The House Republican Budget Plan

On March 14, 2013, the Republican controlled House Budget Committee passed Concurrent Resolution 25, more commonly known as the “Ryan budget”.



Paul Ryan

Referring to the Chairman of the Committee, **Paul Ryan (R) of Wisconsin** and the architect of the budget proposal, it differs drastically in vision and content from the budget adopted by the Senate.

The House budget plan includes the following components:

- ⇒ **Opportunity Expanded**—The budget seeks to equip Americans with the skills to succeed in a 21st century economy and to grow that economy through long-overdue tax reform.
- ⇒ **Safety Net Strengthened**—It gives states more flexibility to tailor programs to their people’s needs and better tools to root out waste, fraud and abuse. The budget builds a partnership between the federal government and communities.
- ⇒ **Retirement Secured**—It strengthens Medicare and

requires Congress and the President to work together to forge a solution for Social Security. It includes reform of both

entitlement programs.

- ⇒ **Fairness Restored**—To restore fairness—and vitality—to our economy, this budget ends cronyism; eliminates waste, fraud, and abuse; and returns the federal government to its proper sphere of activity.
- ⇒ **A Nation Protected**—The first job of the federal government is to secure the safety of its citizens from threats at home and abroad. This budget provides the best equipment, training, and compensation for their continued success. It also keeps faith with the veterans who have served and protected the nation.
- ⇒ **A Budget Process Reformed**—Last Congress, the House Budget committee authored and advanced several statutory reforms to bring more accountability to the federal budget process. This budget continues in the spirit of those proposed reforms, which the Committee will

again pursue after this resolution has been adopted by the House.

The proposed budget achieves a balanced budget in 10 years.

Congressman Chris Van Hollen (MD), the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee, offered a Democratic alternative that was closely aligned with the Senate Resolution. “The House Democratic budget is focused first



Chris Van Hollen

and foremost on putting Americans back to work. Our plan will generate 1.2 million jobs this year compared to the Republicans’ European-style austerity plan. It also makes key investments in America’s future, keeps our commitments to our seniors, and strengthens the middle class....Our plan calls for shared responsibility to build shared prosperity.”

To access information used to produce this article, go to <http://budget.house.gov>

For information on the Democratic alternative, go to <http://democrats.budget.house.gov>

The Republican budget passed the House on March 21, 2013.

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"A Voice for Southern Children"

We're on the Web!
www.southernearlychildhood.org

How to Use This Newsletter

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you...You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

Apps for Working Government Challenge



ChallengePost, a software competitions platform, and a group of partners has launched the **Apps for Working Government Challenge**. The goal of the competition is to "highlight innovative apps that make government more transparent and effective." Partners in this endeavor include the Sunlight Foundation, Personal Democracy Media, The Monkey Cage and No Labels. (For more information about No Labels, see the *December 2010 edition of Public Policy Notes*.)

"Software developers are invited to enter new or existing applications that can help reduce partisan gridlock and increase legisla-

tive productivity at the federal, state or local level. A total of \$5,000 in cash prizes will be awarded to the winning apps."

The challenge asks for submissions in two categories:

- 1) **Educational tools:** Apps that visualize or analyze data to illustrate the problem of partisan gridlock, legislative productivity or lack thereof, and/or related consequences.
- 2) **Solutions & action tools:** Apps that citizens can use to communicate with legislators or mobilize other citizens, or tools that legislators can use to

advance collaboration. "We're excited to introduce this challenge as a way to empower regular citizens to enact change in their governmentThere are a lot of frustrated Americans who want their government to be more productive. They also want to be able to make informed decisions based on hard data rather than rhetoric or ideology." Brandon Kessler, CEO of ChallengePost.

It's a unique approach to citizen advocacy and certainly reflects the increasing reliance on technology in our society. For more information about the challenge and partners, go to

[http:// appsforworkinggov.challengepost.com](http://appsforworkinggov.challengepost.com)

