



Obama Sends His Final Budget to Congress

On the same day when most of the national news was focused on the New Hampshire presidential primary, President Barack Obama submitted his eighth and final budget proposal to Congress.

Republicans are giving it a cold reception now, but past GOP rhetoric championing fiscal sanity has far too often given way to bowing to the demands of the president and his Democratic allies in the Congress.



House Budget Chairman Tom Price of Georgia joined with Senate Budget Chairman Mike Enzi of Wyoming in dismissing the president's proposal as dead on arrival. "Rather than spend time on a proposal that, if anything like this administration's previous budgets, will double down on the same failed policies that have led to the worst economic recovery in modern times, Congress should continue our work on building a budget that balances and that will foster a healthy economy."

Last year's \$439 billion deficit was actually down considerably from Obama's first year in office, when the government ran up a deficit of \$1.4 trillion. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has warned that action must be taken to rein in the deficit, or the nation will face the fiscal problems now experienced in Europe — or worse. Yet, with the Obama budget proposal, the country will soon be looking at budget deficits of over \$1 trillion.

To put that into perspective, just a few short years ago, in the middle of the massive Reagan defense buildup of the 1980s, during the Cold War, the entire budget was under \$1 trillion!

House Budget Chairman Tom Price's assessment of the Obama proposal was blunt. "Nothing in the president's prior budgets ... has shown that the Obama Administration has any real interest in actually solving our fiscal challenges."

In the face of this mounting crisis, it appears that the Obama administration could find nothing of significance in domestic spending to cut. On the contrary, seemingly oblivious to the looming financial crisis, Obama has generated many new ways to spend money. "My budget is going to offer more opportunities for Americans to get the education and job training that they need for a good paying job," Obama boasted before the budget's release.

Among his many proposals are a cornucopia of benefits: There's \$6 billion for job training and \$4 billion for teaching computer science. He asks for \$30 billion in transportation projects, \$1 billion to combat heroin and opioid addictions, and money for the president's effort to cure cancer, called his "moonshot."

The president wants more money, \$12 billion over a 10-year period, to go for feeding low-income children during the summer, arguing that children don't have access to the free and reduced-price lunches that they presently receive during the school year.

A \$2 billion "pilot" program is needed, according to the president's budget, to test state and local innovations for assisting families in distress, caused by such things as serious illness, job loss, or



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substance abuse.

Other spending items include recycling initiatives, paid for by increased taxes on the rich (naturally) and on corporations. Of course, that is how the official socialist, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, has said he would pay for all his big-spending programs.

If workers were to lose a job (a common enough occurrence under the stagnant Obama “recovery”), a state-based system of wage insurance would replace up to half of the workers’ wages. This proposal would even address those who have had to take lower-paying employment, also common since the passage of ObamaCare, which caused many small businesses to lay off workers.

For states that have not yet expanded their Medicaid programs to cover many more uninsured workers, the Obama budget offers some “financial incentive” to the states. Of course, the money that would go to the states must first come from the taxpayers of those states.

One way that the Obama budget proposed to pay for its spending included a \$10-a-barrel oil tax, which would specifically go for “infrastructure” or “clean” transportation projects. This proposal was defended because oil prices are so low at the present time. With the volatility of oil prices, it is probable that the oil tax will outlast low oil prices. Interestingly, when prices at the pump were so much higher earlier in his presidency, Obama defended those high prices as a sign of “prosperity,” asserting that the reason oil prices were lower during the Bush administration was because of the recession.

The hostility toward the Obama proposed budget was so great that the Republican budget committees are not bothering to give a hearing to the president’s budget director, Shaun Donovan, which has been traditional for the past 41 years. Democrats on the House Budget Committee said the refusal to hear Donovan was “disrespectful to the committee members, the public and the president.”

The Obama budget proposal is certainly disrespectful to the idea that the federal government should be kept within the constraints of its enumerated powers found in the U.S. Constitution, and that all this money for his spending must come from the pockets of the taxpayers who actually earned the money. It has been part of the cynical playbook of the majority of American politicians, both Democrat and Republican, since at least the Franklin Roosevelt Administration. Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt’s director of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) summed up what FDR’s administration was doing in the 1930s. “We will spend and spend, tax and tax, elect and elect.” Some say he added that the people were just “too dumb to understand.”

The modern incantation of the Roosevelt method was summed up by Obama to “Joe the Plumber,” when he explained he intended to “spread the wealth around.”

President Lyndon Johnson said it another way. “We are going to take it from the haves and give it to the have-nots, who need it so much.” Of course, no one said it better than Karl Marx, when he declared the Communist Party program — “from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

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