



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 29, 2015

Senate Advances Spending Bill as Sept. 30 Deadline Nears

On Monday, the Senate voted to advance a bipartisan spending bill to fund the government beyond September 30 and avoid a shutdown. The measure, which requires final approval by both the Senate and the House, would keep the federal government funded through December 11.



Monday's vote was 77 to 19, with 31 Republicans joining 44 Democrats and two Independents to pass the bill, which does not include language to defund Planned Parenthood. The vote takes the bill past a filibuster, but the Senate will take another vote Tuesday to approve the bill before sending it to the House.

Government funding must be approved by September 30 in order to avoid a shutdown, and once again, lawmakers have failed to pass the necessary spending bills for a full budget, thereby compelling Congress to rely on a short-term spending measure to keep the government open.

Planned Parenthood receives hundreds of millions of dollars from the federal government annually, and the group's continued funding has been a major component of the debate on the government funding bill after undercover videos that revealed Planned Parenthood's practice of harvesting fetal organs intensified calls to cut funds to the notorious abortion giant.

A funding bill that defunds Planned Parenthood would have passed easily in the House; however, a test vote last week in the Senate failed to garner the necessary 60 votes to block a filibuster by Democrats.

The Senate bill finances the government at a rate equivalent to \$1.017 trillion annually, and includes money for emergency programs and finances for backlogged disability claims for veterans. The White House voiced its approval for the measure, as it permits "critical government functions to operate without interruption, providing a short-term bridge to give the Congress time to pass a budget for the remainder of the fiscal year."

Conservative Republicans in the Senate expressed their displeasure at the Democrats' unwillingness to compromise, preferring instead to shut down the federal government rather than simply defunding Planned Parenthood.

According to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), Democrats in the upper chamber blocked all 12 appropriations bills in an effort to provoke a crisis that they could "exploit to grow the IRS and the D.C. bureaucracy." The Democrats even blocked a military spending measure that would pay for the troops serving overseas, the Associated Press observed.

McConnell opined,

They pursued a deliberate strategy to force our country into another unnecessary crisis. This leaves the funding legislation before us as the only viable way forward in the short term. It doesn't



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represent my first, second, third, or 23rd choice when it comes to funding the government, but it will keep the government open through the fall.

Little time remains, as an agreement must be reached before midnight Wednesday to avoid a shutdown Thursday.

Even if the short-term spending measure passes in the House and Senate, most lawmakers note that it only serves to kick the tense debate on government funding down the road just a few short months.

"The measure is really shortsighted," Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) remarked. "Dec. 11 — that means within the coming weeks we will again be negotiating with the Republicans to avoid another shutdown; we'll also have to find a way to pay our bills."

And while some Republican lawmakers are scrambling to avoid a shutdown and ultimately catering to all President Obama's priorities in the process, others are railing against the GOP's inability to maintain the principles of its platform.

Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas), who is seeking the Republican nomination for president, gave a speech on the Senate floor following Monday's vote decrying the bill's financing for both Planned Parenthood and ObamaCare.

"That doesn't sound clean to me," Cruz said, referring to the so-called "clean" bill that does not include riders. "That actually sounds like a very dirty funding bill."

Obama "simply has to utter the word 'shutdown' and Republican leadership runs to the hills," Cruz asserted, adding,

You want to understand the volcanic frustration with Washington? It's that the Republican leadership in both houses will not fight for a single priority that we promised the voters we would fight for when we were campaigning less than a year ago.

The future of the bill is still unknown, as some conservatives in the House have vowed to oppose any bill that continues to fund Planned Parenthood, and the House is still reverberating over the surprising news of House Speaker John Boehner's resignation. The AP writes, "Some Congressional aides said they expected that Mr. Boehner would be able to push the bill through with support from Democrats, now that he does not have to worry about political reprisal from the hard-line conservatives in his own party."

Reuters observes that whoever becomes Boehner's successor will likely face similar demands from conservatives when the December deadline looms.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), who has declared his candidacy to succeed Boehner, has stated that the House will avoid a shutdown in December.

We've got to stop these [shutdowns]," McCarthy told Fox News. "We need to join together, not just in our ideas but in a media plan. So those in America need to join with us. If we are to be successful, we need to be able to fight and win."



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