



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 1, 2013

Senate Rejects Another House Proposal; Partial Shutdown in Progress

Even as the federal government is now experiencing a partial shutdown for the first time in 17 years, the Senate has [rejected](#) a House motion to form a conference committee to negotiate the differences between the two chambers. As a result, the standoff continues, with no clear resolution in sight.

Congress has a provision for the creation of a “conference” if the House and Senate cannot reach an agreement. The conference provides an opportunity for leaders from each chamber to engage in closed-door negotiations and possibly reach a compromise that will ultimately be voted on by both chambers.



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev., shown) has outright refused to appoint negotiators, declaring that he and his fellow Democrats are not interested in negotiating until the House bends.

Reid explained the Democrat position on Monday night. “We will not go to conference with a gun to our head. We will not go to conference until we get a clean [continuing resolution],” he declared on the Senate floor.

But House Republicans are resigned to tie ObamaCare to a funding measure, as the next phase of the president’s healthcare law begins today, with Americans signing up for taxpayer-funded health insurance through the federal government.

The latest proposal by the House was rejected in the Senate by 54-46 — a complete party line vote. As [noted](#) by *Time* magazine, it is the third time in the last two days that the Senate has voted down a House measure that ties federal spending to the healthcare law.

Democrats have spurned proposals to delay the individual mandate, even as the White House has approved a similar delay granted to big businesses. Senate Democrats have also turned down a proposal that would have ended an ObamaCare exemption for lawmakers and their staffs.

Without a deal, the government’s funding authority is expiring with more than 800,000 federal employees furloughed.

“All over America, federal employees were given four hours this morning to clear of their emails, computers and close their offices,” Senator Reid said. “The government is closed because of the irrationality of what is going on, on the other side of the Capitol.”

But Republicans have asserted that they’ve proposed several measures to keep the federal government running, all of which were rejected by Democrats.

“Democratic leaders finally have their prize: a government shutdown that no one seems to want, but



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them,” Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said. “Every piece of legislation the House sent over would have kept the government from shutting down and every one represented bigger compromise than the last. They’ve not said they won’t even agree to sit down and work out differences. They have literally voted against sitting down and working out a compromise.”

Lawmakers are unsure when the shutdown will end.

House Deputy Whip Tom Cole (R-Okla.) said, “I have no idea. I’m just along for the ride.”

But Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-Kan.) is confident that the Democrats will bow first. “When your approval rating is at 9 percent as an institution, we don’t have much further to go down,” he pointed out. “The president’s approval ratings are not going to go up.”

In the meantime, however, President Obama has addressed a letter to federal employees, blaming the House of Representatives for the current state of affairs.

“None of this is fair to you,” the letter reads. “It should not have happened. And the House of Representatives can end it as it follows the Senate’s lead, and funds your work in the United States Government without trying to attach highly controversial and partisan measures in the process.”

The letter boasts that the federal government has served as “America’s largest employer, with more than 2 million civilian workers and 1.4 million active duty military who serve in all 50 states and around the world,” a point that may not be lost on those who criticize the federal government’s growth. It is perhaps for this reason that there has been very little economic growth and substantial unemployment, items that will have to be addressed in negotiations as the United States prepares to default as it approaches the debt ceiling.

Chris Stirewalt of Fox News [observes](#):

After 33 consecutive months of fiscal cliff diving, starting with the scheduled expiration of tax rates in December 2010, the federal government has been jumping from crisis to crisis. But it’s about to get really real. The government’s ability to borrow the more than \$3 billion a day it needs to fund full operations will be exhausted in 15 days. A partial shutdown is one thing. A partial shutdown plus a debt-limit debacle would be another. Aside from bringing nearly all government functions to a halt, consumers and businesses would likely see interest rates skyrocket and the economy nosedive. With that looming, how long will Senate Democrats and Obama be able to maintain a “no negotiations” stance?

If the chambers manage to reach an agreement and a temporary funding measure is passed, it’s worth noting that it will keep the government running only until November 15, at which point a new crisis will likely arise.

The use of short-term funding measures to keep the federal government in business has proven to be problematic. But Congress has not passed a budget since Obama came to the White House.

Political commentator Michael Reagan [opines](#), “Congress loves passing continuing resolutions, which don’t have their names attached to them, because that’s where they can hide their favorite pork-barrel projects.”

Most analysts contend that a deal will eventually be reached, and an impending fiscal crisis will be prolonged a few more weeks until the next Continuing Resolution debate. And those who did not receive their salaries during the shutdown will be paid retroactively.



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Almost everything will remain the same, while America plunges further into debt.

As for now, not every branch of the federal government is closed as a result of the partial shutdown. Congress approved of a measure to keep the military and defense contractors paid, and offices considered to be fundamental for safety remain intact, at least until the debt ceiling is reached.

Photo of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.): AP Images



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