



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 10, 2011

Senate Rejects Both Dem and GOP Budget Proposal

The *Wall Street Journal* writes:

Three Republicans [Jim DeMint of South Carolina, Mike Lee of Utah, and Rand Paul of Kentucky] — conservatives with close ties to the tea party who want deeper cuts — joined all Democrats in voting against the GOP bill to cut \$57 billion from current spending. There were 56 votes against the bill and 44 votes in favor.



Ten Democrats and one liberal Independent joined all Republicans in voting against the Democratic alternative to cut less than \$5 billion. The vote was 58 against the bill and 42 votes in favor. The Democratic opponents included centrists who argued that it cut too little and liberals who said it cut too much.

White House budget director Jacob Lew contends that both failed votes will clear the way for compromise. “I think the vote in the Senate today make it abundantly clear that we are going to need to work together on a bipartisan basis.”

Lew remains confident that a deal could be struck between the two parties.

The United States government is currently funded under a continuing resolution that expires on March 18, at which point a number of government services would come to a stop.

Lawmakers had hoped to pass a [budget](#) for the remainder of the fiscal year, ending September 30. House Republicans are prepared to pass another continuing resolution that would fund the government for an additional two to four weeks, which will likely include \$2 billion in cuts per week, in addition to the \$2 billion in cuts each week under the current stopgap spending measure.

Republicans are even toying with the possibility of cutting spending week by week if necessary.

Republican Representative Patrick McHenry has stated, “If we keep cutting \$4 billion every two weeks until the end of the fiscal year, Sept. 30, that’ll equal \$60 billion in cuts that we’ve asked for in the House and I think that’s a good deal.”

Republicans have indicated that they are unwilling to settle for a measure that would cut any less than the \$57 billion laid out in the GOP bill.

Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky said, “I implore the American public and those here to look at this problem and say to Congress, ‘We’re not doing enough. You must cut more.’”

Democrats have openly voiced frustration with President Obama’s failure to weigh in on the debate. Senator Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) said on Tuesday on the Senate floor, “The most powerful person in these negotiations — our president — has failed to lead this debate or offer a serious proposal for spending and cuts that he would be willing to fight for.”



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In President Obama's defense, Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois said that Dems "are expecting a little too much" from the President. "They want him to deliver us from this terrible dilemma."

President Obama has sent top aides to meet with Senate Democrats to ensure them that the White House is fully engaged in the debate.

Meanwhile debate over the spending cuts remains contentious, as long-term fiscal issues are being discussed as well, including entitlement reforms and tax code changes. Six Senators from both the GOP and Democratic Party are currently drafting a bipartisan plan to address deficit-reduction.

Democrats have targeted the Republican budget proposal as one that would cause massive job losses, but Republicans have asserted that such claims are absurd. Likewise, the GOP has criticized the Democratic proposal to cut a measly \$5 billion as nothing more than cosmetic.

Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill agrees with the GOP's assertions. McCaskill, who is facing a tough reelection in a swing state, asked for deeper cuts and complained that the Dem's proposal actually increased spending in 15 federal programs. "I am disappointed. We need to make real cuts and move forward in a responsible way to show the American people we get it."

Similarly, Democratic Senator Ben Nelson of Nebraska voted against his party's proposal, declaring, "I'm here to deliver a eulogy: Both bills are dead. And they deserve to be dead. One bill cuts too little. The other bill has too much hate. Neither one is serious."

The other Democrats who voted no against the Democrats' plan are Michael Bennet and Mark Udall of Colorado, Kay Hagan of North Carolina, Herb Kohl of Wisconsin, Carl Levin of Michigan, Bill Nelson of Florida, and James Webb of Virginia. Liberal Independent Bernie Sanders of Vermont also voted no.



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