



WHY THE HOUSE MUST PASS A BUDGET RESOLUTION

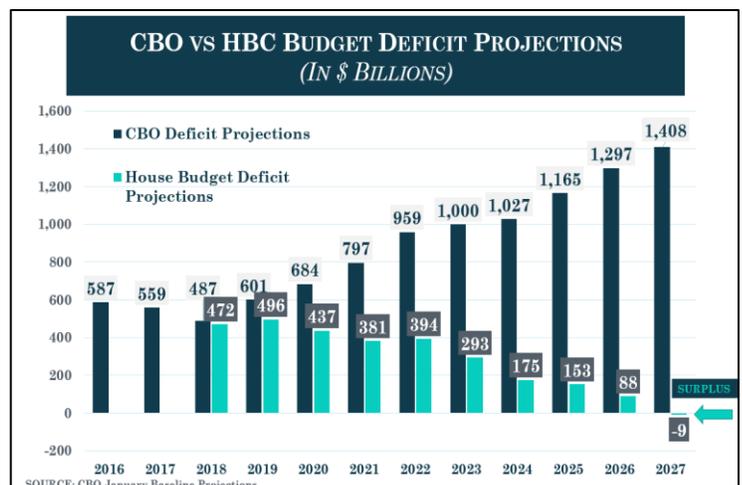
When the 1974 Congressional Budget Act was adopted, its most important feature was the budget resolution – the blueprint for all the spending and tax bills to follow, and the broadest exercise of Congress’s “power of the purse.” The fiscal year 2018 resolution (H. Con. Res. 71), reported by the Budget Committee with unanimous Republican support, is no exception. Passing the resolution is an indispensable step in advancing Congress’s policy agenda and fulfilling its constitutional responsibility. House passage is essential for the following reasons:

Show Congress Can Govern. The act of budgeting – choosing priorities and allocating resources – is the blocking and tackling of governing. It is the legislature’s principal means of directing policy, and hence the most potent way for Congress to assert its Article I authority. It is vitally important for Congress as an institution to restore a vigorous and responsible practice of budgeting, and is essential for upholding the constitutional system itself. The budget resolution is the foundation of the process.

Make Tax Reform a Reality. Only by adopting a budget resolution can Congress employ the powerful tool of reconciliation – immune from a Senate filibuster – for comprehensive tax reform that will simplify the code and let middle-class families keep more of what they earn. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make tax reform real, and advance the House Majority’s pro-growth agenda.

Address Washington’s Fiscal Crisis. Federal spending is rising at unsustainable rates, annual deficits will soon exceed \$1 trillion and continue rising (see figure), and numerous economists warn the U.S. is risking a

sovereign debt crisis. The all-too-frequent *ad hoc* fiscal procedures of the past several years have worsened these problems by leaving them largely unaddressed. Only through a sustained commitment to serious, responsible budgeting can Congress reverse this disastrous course. As a first step, H. Con. Res. 71 provides, through reconciliation, a modest \$203-billion down payment toward the irreplaceable goal of balancing the budget within the next 10 years.



Define Congress’s Agenda. The budget resolution is the only legislative vehicle that reflects a comprehensive view of governing. It provides a framework that gives coherence to the separate spending and tax bills Congress considers throughout the year. Without the budget resolution, fiscal policy can quickly run adrift.

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