



HOUSE
BUDGET
COMMITTEE

Budget Digest

Chairman Steve Womack

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THE BUDGET COMMITTEE: WORKING TOGETHER WITH APPROPRIATORS AND AUTHORIZERS

Established by the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Act of 1974 (Budget Act), the budget resolution provides the framework for consideration of appropriations bills and authorization legislation.

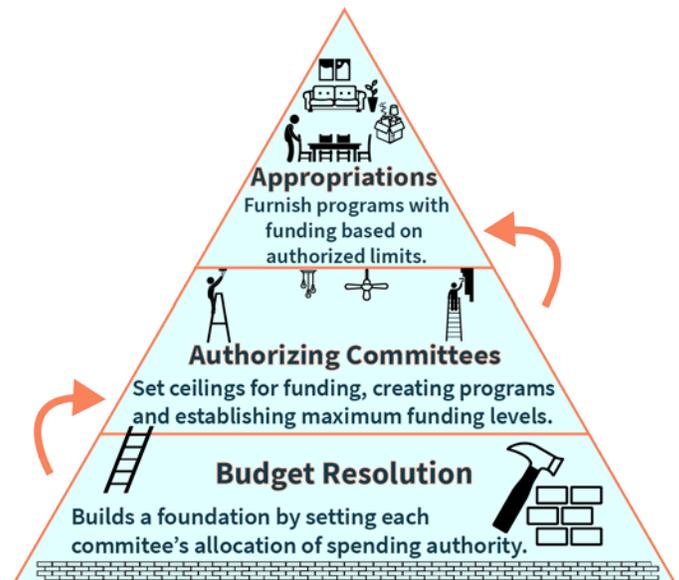
However, there is agreement on both sides of the aisle that Congress's current system for enacting a budget and triggering the ability for appropriations and authorizing committees to do their work is broken.

The Budget Resolution. As discussed in last week's Budget Digest, the budget resolution covers the entire federal budget and includes all spending, revenue, and debt levels. The budget also contains budgetary rules and limits to ensure that appropriators and authorizers comply with the terms of the budget. Authorizing committees submit their legislative priorities, or Views and Estimates, with which the Budget Committee can set committee allocations ("302(a) allocations") to accommodate the legislative priorities of Congress.

Major Budgetary Rules. Under the current budget process, the budget resolution can enforce fiscal discipline by preserving the statutory guidelines of the Budget Act. Specifically, there are controls in place to ensure the goals of timely adoption of the budget resolution and passage of legislation consistent with the budget.

For example, Section 302(f) of the Budget Act prevents Congress from considering legislation that exceeds the 302(a) allocations specified in the budget. Additionally, Section 303 incentivizes passage of the budget resolution first by prohibiting consideration of any bill that has a budgetary effect in the first year for which there is not a budget resolution. Unfortunately, Congress often waives these rules.

Other Budgetary Limits. In addition to general rules to structure consideration of authorization and appropriations measures, the budget resolution often has



appropriations-specific limits. Some common examples include:

- A spending limit for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism, that is separate from other discretionary appropriations spending;
- A limit on Changes in Mandatory Programs (CHIMPs) savings credited to appropriation acts to restrict the amount of uncertain savings that Congress can use to meet the overall discretionary spending limit; and
- A limit on advance Appropriations for only the accounts listed in the report accompanying the budget resolution.

With the recently formed Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform, co-led by Chairman Steve Womack, an effort is now underway to repair and improve the budget process, including how the Budget Committees currently interact with appropriations and authorizing committees.