



Old Budget Habits Die Hard

Senate Democrats Assume Their Budget Responsibilities For The First Time In Four Years And Are Ready To Tax And Spend As Usual

This Week, Senate Democrats Will Debate Their First Budget In Four Years. “Democrats and Republicans on the Senate Budget Committee say they hope to keep the focus during this week’s expected marathon markup on setting a sound course for the country’s fiscal future. Though such issues have dominated the national political conversation since 2008, this week marks the first time in four years that members will actually debate a budget resolution, with proceedings expected to kick off Wednesday.” (Humberto Sanchez and Niels Lesniewski, “First Budget In Four Years For Senate Democrats,” [Roll Call](#), 3/9/13)

- **“For Nearly Four Years, Senate Leaders Have Ducked Their Legal Duty To Craft A Comprehensive Budget Framework.”** (Lori Montgomery, “Senate Democrats’ Budget Plan Will Reopen Battle Over Taxes,” [The Washington Post](#), 1/20/13)
- **The Democrat Senate Has Not Passed A Budget In 1412 Days.** ([On The Conference Report \(Conference Report To Accompany S. Con. Res. 13\)](#): Adopted 53-43: R 0-40; D 52-3; I 1-0, 4/29/09)

SENATE DEMOCRATS RETURN TO THE BUDGET STAGE WITH ONE THAT RAISES TAXES, BARELY CUTS SPENDING, AND NEVER BALANCES

Democrats Have Signaled That Their First Budget In Four Years Will Do More To Raise Taxes Than Cut Spending, “And That It Will Not End Deficits.” “Senate Democrats are tired of the GOP taunts over their failure to pass a budget since 2009 — it is one of Congress’s primary duties — and are determined to get a 10-year measure through the Senate before the Easter recess starts on March 22. They have signaled that their budget will do more to raise revenue than to cut spending and that it will not end deficits.” (Erik Wasson and Bernie Becker, “Senate Dems Strain To Get Budget Over Finish Line By Easter Recess,” [The Hill’s On The Money](#), 3/11/13)

- **“One Reason Senate Democrats Did Not Pass A Budget Bill For The Past Four Years Was That They Wanted To Avoid Unpopular Votes To Cut Spending And Hike Taxes.”** (Erik Wasson and Bernie Becker, “Senate Dems Strain To Get Budget Over Finish Line By Easter Recess,” [The Hill’s On The Money](#), 3/11/13)
- **The Budget Debates “All Present Challenges To Budget Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray (D-Wash.) And Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.).”** “Senate Democrats say they will soon pass their first budget in four years, but it is proving a test. Disputes over tax cuts, spending

reductions and entitlement reform all present challenges to Budget Committee Chairwoman Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.).” (Erik Wasson and Bernie Becker, “Senate Dems Strain To Get Budget Over Finish Line By Easter Recess,” [The Hill's On The Money](#), 3/11/13)

The Senate Democrats’ Blueprint “Wouldn’t Balance The Budget Anytime Soon.” “The blueprints, from the parties’ budget chiefs, cement how far apart Democrats and Republicans are on tax and spending policy. Mr. Ryan’s budget will include no new tax increases or Pentagon cuts while advancing big changes to Medicare and Medicaid, all with the goal of erasing the annual federal deficit in 10 years. Ms. Murray’s plan is expected to increase taxes on upper-income households and corporations and make modest spending cuts to domestic programs; it wouldn’t balance the budget anytime soon.” (Janet Hook and Kristina Peterson, “Opening Budget Bids Set Parties’ Battle Lines,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/10/13)

A Senate Democrat Budget That Includes More Tax Increases Than Spending Cuts Will Cause Trouble For Democrats Facing Re-Election In 2014

“A Bill That Raises Taxes But Does Not Cut Deeply Enough Into Spending Could Run Into Opposition” From Democrats Facing Re-Election In 2014. “A bill that raises taxes but does not cut deeply enough into spending could run into opposition from conservative Democrats, especially those facing reelection in 2014.” (Erik Wasson and Bernie Becker, “Senate Dems Strain To Get Budget Over Finish Line By Easter Recess,” [The Hill's On The Money](#), 3/11/13)

- **Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AR): “I Think It’s Going To Be A Difficult Challenge For Sen. Murray And Others To Get A Budget Out Of The Committee That Will Get Sufficient Votes To Pass The Senate.”** “Sen. Mark Pryor (Ark.), a target for Senate Republicans in next year’s election, was one of three Democrats who opposed the sequester-replacement bill. He opposes establishing a minimum tax on millionaires unless it is part of a major deficit-reduction plan that also cuts entitlements. ‘I think it’s going to be a difficult challenge for Sen. Murray and others to get a budget out of the committee that will get sufficient votes to pass the Senate,’ Pryor said last week.” (Erik Wasson and Bernie Becker, “Senate Dems Strain To Get Budget Over Finish Line By Easter Recess,” [The Hill's On The Money](#), 3/11/13)
- **Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK): “I Am Looking Very Carefully At Spending And I Want To See It Reduced.”** “Sen. Mark Begich (D-Alaska), another facing an election in 2014, said he has ‘made it very clear to the leadership that I am looking very carefully at spending and I want to see it reduced.’” (Erik Wasson and Bernie Becker, “Senate Dems Strain To Get Budget Over Finish Line By Easter Recess,” [The Hill's On The Money](#), 3/11/13)
- **Other Senators Include Max Baucus (D-MT), Kay Hagan (D-NC), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), All Of Which Could Face Political Backlash In Their States In 2014 Should They Decide To Vote For A Budget That Includes Tax Increases.** “In addition to Baucus, Sens. Mark Begich (D-Alaska), Kay Hagan (D-N.C.), Tim Johnson (D-S.D.), Mary Landrieu (D-La.) and Mark Pryor (D-Ark.) are seeking reelection in 2014 in states that went red in last year’s presidential election. A seventh Senate Democrat, Jay Rockefeller (W.Va.), is retiring instead of running for another term in a state that voted overwhelmingly for Romney.” (Erik Wasson and Bernie Becker, “Budget Tax Increases Would Put Red-State Dems In Tough Spot,” [The Hill's On The Money](#), 1/22/13)

OBAMA HAS TO DEAL WITH THE LIBERAL WING OF HIS OWN PARTY BEFORE A GRAND BARGAIN CAN EVEN BECOME A POSSIBILITY

“President Barack Obama May Be Thinking About A ‘Grand Bargain’ To Address Spending And The Federal Deficit, But There’s A Key Constituency He Has To Persuade To Come Along. Democrats.”

(Kate Nocera, “Democrats Not Sold On Grand Bargain,” [Politico](#), 3/10/13)

“The 2012 Election Brought In New Democratic Members Of The House And Senate Who Are More Liberal And More Outspoken, Strengthening The Left Wing Of The Caucus.” “Inevitably, if there is an agreement on a big deal, Democrats will have to get on board for it to pass. But the 2012 election brought in new Democratic members of the House and Senate who are more liberal and more outspoken, strengthening the left wing of the caucus.” (Kate Nocera, “Democrats Not Sold On Grand Bargain,” [Politico](#), 3/10/13)

- **Over Half Of The Democrats In The House Have Threatened To Vote Against “Any And Every” Cut To Entitlement Programs.** “One hundred and seven of the 200 House Democrats signed a letter to Obama threatening to vote ‘against any and every cut to Medicare, Medicaid or Social Security benefits — including raising the retirement age or cutting the cost of living adjustments that our constituents earned and need.’” (Kate Nocera, “Democrats Not Sold On Grand Bargain,” [Politico](#), 3/10/13)
- **25 Members Of The Democratic Caucus Also Signed A Letter To Obama Stating That They Pledge To “Vote Against Any Proposal They See As A Benefit Cut.”** “A second letter, spearheaded by Reps. Alan Grayson (D-Fla.) and Mark Takano (D-Calif.) and supported by the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, simply states they pledge to vote against any proposal they see as a benefit cut. The letter has been signed by 25 other members of the Democratic Caucus. ‘I had a reporter ask me recently, ‘Is this just like the Grover Norquist No Tax Increase Pledge,’ and I said, ‘Yeah, sure, just like a fish is like a bicycle,’ Grayson said on a conference call with PCCC supporters.” (Kate Nocera, “Democrats Not Sold On Grand Bargain,” [Politico](#), 3/10/13)