



FROM: RSC Staff
TO: RSC Members
RE: Strategy Considerations for Continuing Resolution

This memo summarizes the state of play regarding government funding and suggests potential strategies for conservatives to adopt regarding a CR.

We urge all RSC members and staff to provide feedback and preferences for how conservatives should handle upcoming CR negotiations.

Topline Summary

When the House returns in September, Congress will have just three weeks before discretionary government funding expires. Leaders in both the House and Senate have suggested a Continuing Resolution (CR) would be needed to avoid a shutdown.

While House Republicans should continue to advance individual appropriations bills that turn back the clock on Biden's fail policies and bloated discretionary budget, they could also move expeditiously to establish a truly conservative House position on a CR. In doing so, Republicans could seek to: (1) reiterate that House's support for pre-COVID spending levels by ensuring the CR comports with the overall spending limit contained in the House-passed *Limit, Save, Grow Act*; (2) ensure the CR lasts to a date that takes holiday shutdown pressure out of the equation; and (3) show unwavering commitment to fighting Biden's radical agenda by coupling the CR with high priority conservative policies. Notably, national security and veterans funding levels supported by House Republicans would be protected under this approach, and the pressure of a shutdown would shift to Senate Democrats and President Biden.

The House Republican Conference has had success in advancing the most conservative version of a bill possible. House passage of the Limit, Save, Grow Act, the NDAA, and more recently the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs (MilCon-VA) appropriations bill demonstrate this fact. Further House appropriations and a possible CR should be no different.

Background

State of Play: To date, the House has passed one appropriations bill for military construction and veterans affairs funding, and has begun negotiating other individual appropriations bills. President Biden has threatened to [veto](#) House appropriations bills for attacking his social and climate agenda.

Current government funding is set to expire on September 30, 2023. Thus, Speaker McCarthy has [explained](#), "I do expect a short-term CR will be needed to finish all the work that we set out to do...But I don't want the Senate to jam us against the holidays." Similarly, Senate Majority Leader Schumer

stated, "I thought it was a good thing that he recognized that we need a CR in September. I am supportive of that... A CR until early December provides time for consideration of these bipartisan bills."

This week, the House Rules Committee noticed the Defense appropriations bill for amendments and floor consideration. It's also notable that the House has already passed [its FY 2024 NDAA bill](#) to authorize funding for the Department of Defense (DoD) while countering Biden's woke attacks on military personnel.

Additionally, the Biden administration has issued a \$40.1 billion [supplemental funding request](#), which includes [\\$24 billion for Ukraine](#), [\\$12 billion for the](#) Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), and \$4 billion for border-related accounts. The Speaker's office responded to this request [stating](#), "A Republican-led House will not rubber-stamp any blank-check funding requests; rather, the Administration's emergency funding requests must be reviewed and scrutinized on their merits consistent with the practice and principles of our majority."

Current Law FY 2023 Monstrosity Omnibus

The federal discretionary budget is currently being funded through former Speaker Pelosi's lame duck omnibus bill enacted in December of 2022, which provided \$1.7 trillion through FY 2023. This legislation passed the House at the end of the 117th Congress by a vote of [225-201](#), with only 9 Republicans voting yes. RSC Chairman Kevin Hern [described](#) the omnibus as "Nancy Pelosi's \$2 trillion lame duck omnibus, which was riddled with additional mandatory spending, only added to our nation's \$31 trillion national debt and accelerated the United States' approach to yet another fiscal cliff." Then-GOP Leader McCarthy [stated](#) similarly, "This **monstrosity** is one of the most shameful acts I have ever seen in this body."

Considerations for Conservatives

*A "clean" CR would simply serve as a continuation of the FY 2023 omnibus "monstrosity" by extending Pelosi's bloated spending levels and Biden's failed policies. Thus, as part of an effort to expeditiously establish a conservative House position on a CR, members must decide what **funding level, attached policy reforms, and length** justify passage of temporary funding.*

Length of a CR:

The duration of a CR is critically important. Historically, conservatives have expressed significant concern with CRs that expire just ahead of the holidays. This frequently used tactic is designed to pressure rank and file members to swallow increased spending levels under the threat of a shutdown and before Members are allowed to make it home for the holidays. As House conservatives coalesce around the ideal length of a CR, they should *dismiss any CR (or combination of short-term CRs) designed to create the threat of a holiday shutdown.*

Funding Level of a CR:

In FY 2023, the federal government is expected to have a budget deficit of \$1.54 trillion. Over the next decade, annual deficits are projected to double to nearly \$3 trillion. The FY 2023 omnibus monstrosity is the perfect example of how we arrived at this unsustainable fiscal situation that has driven up inflation, interest rates, and the cost of servicing U.S. federal debt. For these and other reasons, House Republicans in the 118th Congress have been united in calling for reduced discretionary spending levels.

Luckily, House Republicans have already coalesced around a position of ensuring House appropriations bills are set to pre-COVID discretionary spending levels. Indeed, the Limit, Save, Grow

Act, which passed the House with near-unanimous Republican support (only four Republicans voting no, all of whom wanted [deeper spending cuts](#)), included a cap on discretionary spending set to pre-COVID levels. Moreover, a recent poll of RSC members showed that [78 percent](#) of respondents agree that the House should pass appropriations bills at the Limit, Save, Grow Act's topline level without relying on rescissions to get there.

By contrast, the Senate Appropriations Committee recently advanced appropriations bills that would effectively bust through the recently enacted statutory caps on discretionary spending. It is important that House Republicans position themselves to [counter the position](#) of the Senate as it works through individual appropriations measures and establishes a conservative House position on a CR.

House conservatives may push for a CR to be coupled with the House-passed MilCon-VA and any other individually appropriations measure the House soon passes, particularly Defense appropriations. The Defense appropriations bill and the MilCon-VA bill both contain national security funding increases. Non-defense discretionary accounts could be funded in a CR at a reduced level so that the overall funding reflects the pre-COVID levels set forth in the Limit, Save, Grow Act. Conservatives may believe that such a strategy would reiterate the House's position for pre-COVID funding levels, prioritize national defense over Biden's woke agencies, and shift pressure by showing House Republicans have a plan to responsibly keep the government from shutting down.

Conservative Policy Priorities

For nearly three years, the Biden administration has waged a war on American energy, decimated our border security, spread woke ideology wherever possible, and turned our federal law enforcement agencies into political henchmen. While many of these issues can and should also be addressed through regular appropriations, conservatives may still insist on utilizing a CR to reverse Biden's disastrous policies on these and other pressing issues. For example:

- **Energy** – Biden's war on American energy has [undermined national security](#), worsened the [inflation crisis](#), and left America more [dependent on adversarial nations](#). In conjunction with a CR, conservatives may consider advocating for policies that will drive down the price of energy for all Americans and begin to restore U.S. energy security and prosperity. Earlier this Congress, the House of Representatives [passed](#) H.R. 1, [the Lower Energy Costs Act](#) through a bi-partisan vote. H.R. 1, would streamline regulations, end Biden's moratorium on leasing, and enact historic permitting reforms (RSC's legislative bulletin can be found [HERE](#)). Conservatives may consider advancing similar policies in conjunction with a CR.
- **Border** – As previously noted, the Biden administration's policies at the border have resulted in an unprecedented national security and humanitarian crisis. Earlier this Congress, [House Republicans passed](#) H.R. 2, [the Secure the Border Act of 2023](#), which would require the Biden administration to enforce the law, rein in their policies facilitating an open border, and continue construction of a border wall. House Republicans may consider [advancing similar policies](#) in conjunction with a CR. RSC's legislative bulletin on H.R. 2, can be found [HERE](#).
- **Life** – Conservatives may want to ensure that any continuation of government funding through a CR does not fund Biden's many [radical policies](#) that expand taxpayer funding of abortion and undermine the laws of states that protect innocent unborn life.
- **Combatting Wokeness and Weaponization** – The Biden administration has weaponized the Department of Justice (DOJ) against [political opponents](#), [concerned parents](#), and [communities of faith](#). Similarly, the Biden administration has launched a government wide woke agenda on climate radicalism and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Conservatives may consider advocating for policies such as RSC Chairman Hern's [Work Not Woke Act](#), which would prohibit funding for Biden's divisive DEI executive orders and allow for federal employees to simply do their jobs and serve the American people. Conservatives may also consider limiting

funds for various programs that are used to weaponize Biden's radical agenda. The RSC FY 24 Budget "Protecting America's Economic Security" outlines many reforms and limitations to end Biden's woke and weaponized policies, and can be found [HERE](#).

- **Regulatory Reform** - The Biden administration continues to implement burdensome, unnecessary, and costly regulations that add billions of dollars of cost onto the economy. Conservatives may consider including solutions that would give congress authority to rein in the power of the administrative state, such as the [REINS Act](#). The REINS Act would give Congress power to approve major rules before they go in effect. It has been estimated that [Biden regulations have cost the economy \\$309 billion during his first two years in office](#). During this time, the Biden Administration [implemented 69 regulations that meet the threshold](#) requiring Congressional approval under REINS, more than three times as many as were issued by President Trump. The House of Representatives has passed the REINS Act twice during the 118th Congress. The REINS Act was included as Title IV of the [Limit, Save, Grow Act](#) and also passed the House on a [bipartisan basis](#) as a stand-alone measure.

Biden's Supplemental Funding Request

In addition to evaluating the merits of each element of a supplemental funding package, conservatives should scrutinize it to determine which parts should more appropriately be funded through the regular appropriations process. Congress has yet to enact a single full-year appropriations bill. Emergency spending is not subject to normal budgetary constraints, and therefore has been subject to abuse in the past, particularly to surreptitiously circumvent the statutory spending caps. As previously mentioned, the Senate Appropriations Committee has also embraced emergency spending designations to circumvent the current law caps on discretionary spending. [Generally](#), emergency spending should be for temporary needs that are sudden, urgent, and unforeseen. Even for spending that meets this threshold, conservatives should seek offsetting spending cuts where possible.

Conservatives may also wish to separate unrelated aspects of supplemental funding. For instance, even conservatives who support Ukraine funding may nonetheless wish to separate it from funding for the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which would provide aid to Americans impacted by natural disasters such as those in Hawaii, and a CR designed to prevent a shutdown. Heritage Foundation President Kevin Roberts recently argued, "So to me, reports that Washington politicians are attempting to use hurricane relief money to mask or leverage funding for the war in Ukraine doesn't just elicit abstract outrage. Its personal." Moreover, some conservatives may outright oppose additional aid to Ukraine, particularly in the absence of a comprehensive strategy from the Biden administration.

Additionally, conservatives may note that Biden's supplemental request included funding purportedly for addressing the crisis he has created at the border. Conservatives must recognize that sending more money without adequate policy changes would simply aid and abet Biden and Mayorkas' illegal open border policies that are facilitating the humanitarian tragedy at the border and continue to undermine national security. They may also be concerned that not a single penny was requested for border wall construction.