



March 8, 2019

Support the No Budget, No Pay Act, S. 39

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to cosponsor the No Budget, No Pay Act, S. 39. Introduced by Sen. Mike Braun (R-Ind.), the No Budget, No Pay Act would put skin in the game for Congress to get serious about its power of the purse and get back on track to doing its job.

Americans across the country learn in school that one of Congress' most notable powers is the power of the purse; that is, to control what is funded by taxpayer dollars, in what amount, and for how long. The No Budget, No Pay Act would ensure that, should Congress fail to properly carry out its duties in the most basic of senses, its members do not get paid.

To carry out its power of the purse, Congress is supposed to pass a budget resolution outlining the spending levels across the government for each fiscal year and subsequently to appropriate funds guided by such levels. As part of this, the House and Senate are required to complete the annual appropriations process, passing all 12 bills, by October 1 of each year. However, this has not been done successfully since 1996.

This past fiscal year, 2019, saw all 12 appropriations bills passed and signed into law in February 2019, nearly full five months past the statutory deadline Congress is supposed to meet. In fiscal year 2018, they were just short of six months late. Both of the past two years saw partial government shutdowns as a result of Congress' extreme tardiness.

Simply put, Congress continually -- and without shame or punishment outside of the court of public opinion -- fails to do its most simple and apparent job: Budget for and appropriate funds to carry out the legislation that it passes. In the real world, this would certainly not be acceptable. As Romina Boccia of the Heritage Foundation put it, "Most Americans have to perform at least the minimal requirements of their jobs if they want to get paid. The same should hold for lawmakers. That's just fair."

The No Budget, No Pay Act would halt representatives' and senators' salaries after October 1 if Congress has not passed a concurrent budget resolution and required spending bills by that date. To comply with the 27th Amendment, which prevents each Congress from changing its own salary, the legislation would take effect February 21, 2021.

Although there is much more to be done to fix the broken budget and appropriations process in order to get spending under control and address out \$22 trillion debt, incentivizing Congress to at least budget and appropriate on time is a good first step. For these reasons, I urge you to contact your representative and ask him or her to cosponsor the No Budget, No Pay Act, S. 39.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks