



July 23, 2019

Key Vote NO on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your senators and representative and ask them to vote NO on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 will increase the discretionary spending caps by more \$320 billion over two fiscal years and suspend the debt limit through July 31, 2021.

In February 2018, Congress passed the Bipartisan Budget Act, which increased the discretionary spending caps by a total of \$296 billion between FY 2018 and FY 2019. As FreedomWorks warned at the time, “the spending levels established under this deal will establish a new baseline for federal spending, drowning taxpayers and future generations with red ink simply because Congress lacks the political will to do the right thing.”

Republicans in Congress, including many who claim to be fiscal conservatives, went along with this deal and helped pave the road to where we are today. Once again, Congress is prepared to pass legislation to bust the discretionary spending caps, ensuring \$1 trillion budget deficits as far as the eye can see.

Passed in 2011, the Budget Control Act was meant to be a check on federal spending. If the so-called “supercommittee” created by this law could not agree on a deficit-reduction package of at least \$1.2 trillion, an auto-enforcement provision known as sequestration would kick in to automatically reduce discretionary spending by \$1.2 trillion over ten years. At the time, America was experiencing \$1-plus trillion budget deficits and House Republicans were rightly insistent on spending cuts before increasing the debt limit.

After the agreement on the Budget Control Act, John Boehner (R-Ohio), who served as Speaker of the House at the time, said, “Beginning to take steps toward fixing our fiscal problems will in fact provide more confidence for employers in America, the people we expect to reinvest in our economy and to create jobs.” It was a hard-fought victory for House Republicans and one of the few real successes that House Republicans during their eight years in the majority.

It wasn't long before Republicans and Democrats began running away from the Budget Control Act. Congress busted the spending caps on three separate occasions, through the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), discretionary spending would be \$1.119 trillion in FY 2020 and \$1.145 trillion in FY 2021. The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 would increase discretionary spending to \$1.290 trillion in FY 2020 and \$1.298 trillion in FY 2021. In total, this is a more than \$320 billion spending increase over two fiscal years. Additionally, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 also includes \$156.5 billion over two fiscal years for overseas contingency operations (OCO), which is used by Congress to bypass the discretionary spending caps.

Prior to this budget deal, the CBO projected that the budget deficit would be \$892 billion for FY 2020 and \$962 billion in FY 2021. The discretionary spending levels in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 guarantee a return to \$1 trillion budget deficits. Making matters worse, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 suspends the debt limit through July 31, 2021, providing the Department of the Treasury with a virtual blank check to borrow, accumulating more debt that future generations will have to shoulder.

This deal on the discretionary spending caps is nothing short of a surrender by Republican "leadership" in the House and Senate and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Of course, we'll be told that spending cuts will be on the agenda when Republicans get control of Congress again. Sadly, those promises never seem to come to pass. After all, Republican "leadership" and rank-and-file members don't have any intention of governing by the limited government rhetoric on which they campaign. Instead, these Republicans vote with Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) for higher spending and more debt.

FreedomWorks will count the vote on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 when calculating our Scorecard for 2019. This vote will be weighted. The scorecard is used to determine eligibility for the FreedomFighter Award, which recognizes members of the House and Senate who consistently vote to support economic freedom and individual liberty.

Sincerely,

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

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks