

Science Policy Office

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After shutdown, budget deal still needed – Email Congress today!

After several days of tense negotiations, at midnight on January 20th, the most recent continuing resolution expired forcing a government shutdown.

So, how did we get here? It's been a months long battle that has only partially been about government funding. What made the appropriations fight decidedly trickier this year was the Democrats desire to tie government funding to immigration, specifically a fix for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that the President suspended in September. Democrats see the appropriations process as their one opportunity to force Republicans to negotiate on this issue since the Senate needs Democratic votes to pass appropriations bills.

The government had been operating under a series of continuing resolutions (CR) that kept the government running and gave Congress more time to finish the appropriations process. The most recent CR ran through January 19. On Thursday evening, the House of Representatives passed another CR that lasted through February 16. However, the Friday night Senate vote fell short of the 60 votes needed to keep the government open.

An agreement emerged Monday morning after a weekend of back-and-forth negotiations between Senate leaders. Just hours ago, the Senate passed a CR to fund the government through February 8 after receiving a commitment from Republicans to hold a vote on immigration. The bill now heads to the House, where it is expected to pass, paving the way for federal employees to return to work on Tuesday.

Now the real work begins. Congress still needs to come up with an agreement that addresses government spending and the budget caps on defense and non-defense discretionary spending. We're asking you to email your members of Congress today and urge them to finalize a budget deal that raises the caps on discretionary spending and prioritizes research funding. With only three weeks until the next spending showdown, Congress must act now.

Email your members here.

Headline: Reach a Budget Deal and Prioritize Research

Dear XX,

As a constituent of yours and a concerned citizen, I urge Congress to reach a bipartisan budget agreement that raises the spending caps, maintains parity for defense and non-defense discretionary spending, and prioritizes agriculture and natural resources research.

Agriculture and natural resources R&D is fundamental to national security, food safety and security, and U.S. economic stability. It benefits all Americans from small farmers to agribusinesses and to people in urban and rural areas alike. Federal investments in research on agriculture and natural resources are falling behind internationally, and neither the private sector nor local governments are picking up the slack. With at least a 20-fold return on our investment in agriculture R&D, we cannot afford a budget without this as a major priority. Please act now.

