

GOP BUDGET BLUES

HOW CONSERVATIVE POLICIES
INCREASE INEQUALITY



Introduction

This holiday season, conservatives have found an unlikely target for attacks that are typically reserved for President Obama and his supporters: Pope Francis, who committed the political sin of warning that rising economic inequality is harmful to society. While rejecting “trickle-down theories” that depend on “a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power,” the Pope declared that “we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills.” According to Rush Limbaugh, the Pope’s call for economic justice amounts to “pure Marxism.”

As congressional leaders from both parties negotiate over the federal budget, it is important to remember that many Republicans are similarly unsympathetic to the idea that addressing inequality should be a priority. Echoing Mitt Romney’s infamous “47 percent” remarks, congressional conservatives routinely blame the safety net for making people “dependent” on government, implying that low-income Americans remain at the bottom of the economic ladder by choice. For instance, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), the leading Republican voice on budget issues, has complained that “we’re going to a majority of takers versus makers in America.”

That attitude has been on display throughout the recovery from the massive recession that President Bush left behind, even as the wealthiest Americans recovered their losses and the income gap widened. In each of the past three years, Ryan has authored – and House Republicans have approved – extreme budget plans that shred the safety net while providing tax giveaways to the wealthy and big corporations. Republicans have repeatedly sabotaged bipartisan budget talks by demanding that working Americans shoulder the burden of deficit reduction while dismissing any proposal that requires the rich to pay their fair share. And, despite shamelessly citing the job losses that Obama inherited as evidence of his supposed failure, Republicans have been consistent in obstructing efforts to actually help the unemployed.

After a year in which congressional Republicans blocked comprehensive immigration reform, refused to vote on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, and shut down the government, the post-election promise of a more compassionate and inclusive GOP is a distant memory. For budget negotiations to succeed, Republican leaders must finally reject the extreme elements of their party and accept that the government has a responsibility to protect the interests of all Americans – not just the wealthy contributors who fund their campaigns.

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Echoing Mitt Romney's "47 Percent," Republicans Attack Americans In Need

Rep. Paul Ryan: 60 Percent Of Americans Are "Takers" Who Are "Dependent On Government For Their Livelihoods." According to the Huffington Post, "Republican vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan said in 2010 that 60 percent of Americans receive more financial benefits from the government than they pay in taxes, making them 'takers,' rather than 'makers,' according to a 2010 video of Ryan speaking with Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.). 'Right now about 60 percent of the American people get more benefits in dollar value from the federal government than they pay back in taxes,' Ryan said. 'So we're going to a majority of takers versus makers in America and that will be tough to come back from that. They'll be dependent on the government for their livelihoods [rather] than themselves.'" [Huffington Post, [10/5/12](#)]

Rep. Paul Ryan: 30 Percent Of Americans Want A "Welfare State" Instead Of The American Dream. According to the Huffington Post, "Mitt Romney and his running mate, Paul Ryan, share a similarly dim view of a very large portion of Americans, according to previously unreported remarks by Ryan. Both believe that many of their fellow citizens are dependent on government and have no motivation to improve their lives -- but they disagree over the precise number. Romney's estimate, famously, is 47 percent. For Ryan, it's 30 percent. 'Seventy percent of Americans want the American dream. They believe in the American idea. Only 30 percent want the welfare state,' Ryan said. 'Before too long, we could become a society where the net majority of Americans are takers, not makers.' [...] Ryan's comments were delivered as part of his keynote address at *The American Spectator's* 2011 Robert L. Bartley Gala Dinner, which the magazine posted online." [Huffington Post, [10/2/12](#)]

Rep. Steve King: Unemployment Benefits Are Creating "A Nation Of Slackers." According to a transcript of Rep. Steve King's (R-IA) remarks on the House floor, "The former Speaker of the House, Speaker Pelosi, has consistently said that unemployment checks are one of those reliable and immediate forms of economic recovery. You get a lot of bang for the buck when you pay people not to work, and they will go out and spend that money immediately. Therefore, we should pass out unemployment checks and stimulate the economy. That statement is ridiculous where I come from, Mr. Speaker, to pay people not to work and somehow in that formula it stimulates the economy. [...] And the 80 million Americans that are of working age but are simply not in the workforce need to be put to work. We can't have a Nation of slackers and then have me have to sit in the Judiciary Committee, listening to them argue that there's work that Americans won't do so we have to import people to do work Americans won't do and borrow money to pay the welfare of people that won't work. That is a foolish thing for a Nation to do. We've got to get this country back to work and get those people out of the slacker roles and on to the employed roles." [King Floor Speech via GPO.gov, [9/15/11](#), emphasis added]

- **Rep. Steve King: Unemployed Are "Voting Themselves Benefits From The Public Trough."** According to a transcript of Rep. Steve King's (R-IA) speech on the House floor, "And so we're at this situation now where, in the early part of this country, there was a policy that you had to be a land-owning male of age and other qualifications in order to vote because they wanted the public policy to be established by people that had skin in the game. ... Put some of that philosophy back in where it requires a supermajority to raise taxes, there is a restraint there that brings back some of that philosophy that helps offset the disadvantage that the working American has today who's paying those taxes. Your barber is at a disadvantage because some of the hair that he cuts is of people that aren't working. I'd say at least one out of every three heads of hair that your barber cuts is somebody that is in that role of 100 million Americans of working age who are not in the workforce, many of them are voting, they are voting themselves benefits from the public trough." [Congressional Record, 11/18/11]

- **Rep. Steve King: “We Should Not Be Borrowing Money From The Chinese And The Saudis To Fund Somebody's Tattoos.”** According to a transcript of Rep. Steve King’s (R-IA) comments on the House floor, “But even figuratively speaking, it's a little bit of a stretch to argue that a 2 1/2 percent reduction in anticipated expenditures of the food stamp program over a 10-year period of time is going to do something to starve kids when we're addressing the eligibility for the food stamp program. And we are seeing narratives--facts, actually--of people that are using their EBT card--that electronic benefits transfer card, that card that has spawned rap music about its easy accessibility and its marketability on the street--to get tattoos, and using that food stamp EBT card to bail at least one individual out of jail. ... We've punished the producers enough. We've borrowed enough money from the Chinese and the Saudis. We should not be borrowing money from the Chinese and the Saudis to fund somebody's tattoos, to hold up a tattoo parlor that in the neon sign says, we take EBT cards. No, Mr. Speaker, there has to be a place to draw the line and actually say no. The gentleman from Massachusetts gave me no indication, even though I listened to every word, of where he would say enough is enough, or even an amount being too much.” [Congressional Record, H2479, [5/7/13](#)]

Rep. Tom Reed: Reason Businesses “Cannot Hire Individuals Is Because They Simply Cannot Pass A Drug Test.” According to a transcript of Rep. Tom Reed’s (R-NY) comments on the House floor, “And so, what this does is it lowers those numbers of weeks, it puts in commonsense reforms by making it a requirement that people are looking for a job. It gives the states the flexibility to implement drug testing and drug screening to make sure that the workforce of America has the ability to go back to work when those jobs are available. I have been back in my district, and we do down halls all the time. And what I’ve heard from small business owners across our district is that one of the main reasons that they cannot hire individuals is because they simply cannot pass a drug test. [Congressional Record, H8740, [12/13/11](#)]

Rep. Blake Farenthold: “We’re So Generous In Some Of Our Social Problems That People Are Unwilling To Get A Job Outside In The Heat.” At a town hall meeting, Rep. Blake Farenthold (R-TX) said, “Drug testing for recipients of various welfare programs, I really think that’s something that needs to be considered. We’ve gotta, you know, nobody wants to starve anybody. Everybody wants to help folks out. But we’ve got a system where you can stay on unemployment for an awfully long time. And I think we need to create a system of decreasing benefits over time to encourage you to get a job. I think anybody who’s had an alcoholic in their life or somebody with a drug problem, realizes that until things get bad enough there’s no incentive to change. I think that we’re so generous in some of our social problems that people are unwilling to get a job outside in the heat. Rather than get 15 dollars to go get roofing they’d rather get 9 or 10 dollars in benefits. I think drug testing is not an unreasonable requirement to get benefits.” [YouTube, [4/28/11](#)]

Sen. Dean Heller On Unemployment Benefits: “Is The Government Now Creating Hobos?” According to the Las Vegas Sun, “Republican Rep. Dean Heller wonders if the government creating a new generation of ‘hobos.’ Heller told a weekend crowd at the Republican Party’s Lincoln Day Dinner in Elko that Washington’s efforts to continue extending unemployment benefits for jobless Americans may be creating a dependent class, unable to get back to work, according to the Elko Daily Free Press. ‘Is the government now creating hobos?’ Heller asked.” [Las Vegas Sun, [2/23/10](#)]

Rep. Jack Kingston: “There Seems To Be A Belief In The Nanny State That There's Something Wrong With Requiring Able-Bodied People To Work.” According to transcript of Rep. Jack Kingston’s (R-GA) comments on the House floor, “There's two very major points of this. Number one is that we cannot continue to deny able-bodied people the dignity of work. There seems to be a belief in the nanny state that there's something wrong with requiring able-bodied people to work. That's what this amendment does. It says to you that if you can work, you ought to be working so that other people who are unable to, they can get the needed assistance.” [Congressional Record, H3960, [6/20/13](#)]

Rep. Mo Brooks: Welfare Programs “Incentivize Illegals To Come Here.” According to a transcript of Rep. Mo Brooks’ (R-AL) comments on the House floor, “You’ll remember these welfare programs that got passed as a part of the Great Society program where America started paying foreigners to come into our country where they start accessing welfare benefits? I would submit that that is a huge incentive for why these individuals have come to America who previously would not have come here under illegal terms. But because we’ve got laws in place that pay and incentivize illegals to come here, that is, in fact, a major reason why they’re here.” [Congressional Record, H4509, [7/16/13](#)]

Rep. Louie Gohmert: Welfare Recipients Get Paid “To Not Do Anything But Laugh And Joke And Cut Up And Have Fun And Eat Snacks.” According to a transcript of Rep. Louie Gohmert’s (R-TX) comments on the House floor, “Because when you give people the same amount of money to work and sweat and produce as you pay them to sit in the shade and not do anything but laugh and joke and cut up and have fun and eat snacks, then I don’t care how dedicated you are, at some point you’ll quit working out in the hot sun and you’ll sit in the shade and no one will have food to eat. That’s why socialists or progressive societies always fail. ... And what you learn from that, if you go back and do the studies--and I was surprised, knowing the liberal bent of Harvard, to be at Harvard for a seminar and have a dean have charts that said, since the Great Society legislation started in the sixties, here is a chart of single mothers’ income when adjusted for inflation; and the graph showed a flat line when adjusted for inflation. Single mothers, since the sixties when the Great Society and all the giveaway programs began, the welfare system, the welfare state began here in America, single moms flatlined. When adjusted for inflation, they never improved their situation, on average. Some did, but, on average, it was flatlined.” [Congressional Record, H1984, [4/12/13](#)]

Rep. Ted Yoho Mocked Food Insecurity: “I Think There’s 330 Million People Starving, At Least Three Times A Day, We Call It Breakfast, Lunch And Dinner.” According to Right Wing Watch, “The congressman then moved on to food stamp funding, which the House GOP recently severed from the Farm Bill. Yoho said he doubted that around 50 million Americans face food insecurity, joking: ‘I think there’s 330 million people starving, at least three times a day, we call it breakfast, lunch and dinner.’ He added that huge proposed cuts to food aid won’t impact anyone, telling the audience that ‘not one person would lose a calorie or crumb that deserves it.’” [Right Wing Watch, [8/5/13](#)]

Sen. Rand Paul: “We Run A Deficit Giving You Free Stuff.” According to a transcript of Sen. Rand Paul’s (R-KY) comments on the Senate floor, “We have to wake up soon as a country. We are literally insolvent. ... So instead of having a President who runs around saying he is going to stick it to rich people, what we really need are honest people to go around the country and say to people: If you are working class or you are retired, the government is stealing from you. The government is stealing your savings through big government. On the one hand, they offer you something. They offer you baubles. They offer you something for free: Here is a cell phone. Just take the cell phone and vote for me. It will be OK. The problem is, it is not free. On the one hand, you get the free cell phone. On the other hand, you get \$4 gas. On the other hand, you get food costs rising. Why do prices go up? Because we run a deficit giving you free stuff, and then we print money to pay for it, and that steals value from what you have. It is not that gas is more precious; gas is rising because the value of the dollar is shrinking. Food is rising because the value of the dollar is shrinking.” [Congressional Record, S8463, [12/31/12](#)]

Rep. Todd Rokita: Government “Handouts” Lead To “Terrible Tyranny Or Ultimate Failure.” According to a transcript of Rep. Todd Rokita’s (R-IN) comments on the House floor, “Mr. Speaker, we believe in giving a hand up, not necessarily a handout, because we believe that hand up is what made America strong, while a handout is what basically caused other nations in history to fail, resulting ultimately in tyranny. A government can’t be all things to all people; it can’t do everything for everybody. It has been tried before. This is not a new idea, Mr. Speaker. But every time it has been tried in our history, it has resulted in terrible tyranny or ultimate failure altogether. Let me give you an example, Mr. Speaker. Approximately 48 million Americans are on food stamps, more than at any other point in our history. Now, I know we have been going through some tough times, but that is not because too few people are getting food stamps. The government is handing out free cell phones; but welfare

programs are supposed to be for the poorest of the poor, for those who need that hand up. We shouldn't be giving handouts.” [Congressional Record, H2714, [5/16/13](#)]

- **Rokita Suggested That People With Microwaves And Internet Access Aren't Really “Poor.”**

According to a transcript of Rep. Todd Rokita's (R-IN) comments on the House floor, “Just look at the facts. Under the Census Bureau's definition of ‘poor,’ 80 percent of poor households have air-conditioning. In 1970, only 36 percent of the entire U.S. population enjoyed air-conditioning. Ninety-two percent of poor households have a microwave. Nearly three-fourths have a car or truck, and 31 percent have two or more cars or trucks. Nearly two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Two-thirds have at least one DVD player, and 70 percent have a VCR. These are all poor households. These are mostly households that would qualify also for food stamps and for other welfare programs. Half of them have a personal computer, and one in seven have two or more computers. Forty-three percent have Internet access. One-third has a wide-screen plasma or LCD TV. Now, we are a giving Nation. We want to help out. Our volunteerism and our charity work are second to none in this entire world. It is actually part of our American exceptionalism. It is what makes us unique and different from any other place on this Earth. I'd like to know the American who thinks that given everything I've just listed that that fits his definition of ‘poor’ and that that's whom we should be helping and not others who really, really need, again, that temporary hand up and not the permanent handout.” [Congressional Record, H2714, [5/16/13](#)]

Rep. John Fleming: “We Didn't Have A Problem With Illegal Immigration Until We Developed A Robust Welfare System.” According to a transcript of Rep. John Fleming's (R-LA) comments on the House floor, “You know, Milton Friedman, the famous economist, said that you can have open borders if you don't have a welfare state. But if you have a welfare state, you're going to have to close your borders, and you're going to have to seal them. You see, we didn't have a problem with illegal immigration until we developed a robust welfare system in this country.” [Congressional Record, H4202, [7/8/13](#)]

Rep. Matt Salmon: “I Think One Of The Things That Has Really Broken Our Country Is That We Have Become This Welfare State, A Bunch Of Dependents Across The Country.” According to a transcript of Rep. Matt Salmon's (R-AZ) comments on the House floor, “I think one of the things that has really broken our country is that we have become this welfare state, a bunch of dependents across the country. ... And the old traditional welfare program is almost like we'll pay you to stay out of society. We'll give you just barely enough to subsist, but you stay out of society. And that's the message, subliminally or otherwise, that it gives to those people. ... We don't really have much to offer you. You don't offer much value to society, so we will pay you to stay home.” [Congressional Record, H6448, [10/9/13](#)]

Rep. Stephen Fincher: “The One Who Is Unwilling To Work Shall Not Eat.” According to the New York Times, “Mr. Fincher, who was elected in 2010 on a Tea Party wave and collected nearly \$3.5 million in farm subsidies from the government from 1999 to 2012, recently voted for a farm bill that omitted food stamps. ‘The role of citizens, of Christianity, of humanity, is to take care of each other, not for Washington to steal from those in the country and give to others in the country,’ Mr. Fincher, whose office did not respond to interview requests, said after his vote in May. In response to a Democrat who invoked the Bible during the food stamp debate in Congress, Mr. Fincher cited his own biblical phrase. ‘The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat,’ he said.” [New York Times, [9/4/13](#)]

Rep. Phil Gingrey: “We've Cranked That Safety Net Up To Being A Hammock ... Congress Wants To Bring Them The Grapes And The Drinks And The Fan.” According to a transcript of Rep. Phil Gingrey's (R-GA) comments on the House floor, “This side of the aisle over here, the left, for more than 100 years in this country, have always driven to increase the dependency class in America. ... And the expanding dependency class, the people who have had a nice safety net to be on for a long time now, now we've cranked that safety net up to being a hammock, and now this Congress wants to bring them the grapes and the drinks and the fan. So the safety

net that's become a hammock diminishes our vitality. We don't get out of that hammock when it's comfortable. We need to have some reward for us working and taking care of our families.” [Congressional Record, H1649, [3/18/10](#)]

Rep. Eric Cantor Suggested It’s Not “Fair” That Poor People Do Not Pay Income Taxes: “Everybody Should Have Some Skin In The Game, Even If It’s A Dollar.” According to a transcript of Rep. Eric Cantor’s (R-VA) appearance at Rice University, “You speak about sort of the fairness issue in the tax code, and I agree that the tax code does not breed fair results. And we’ve got to look to see and make sure it’s a balanced approach. But right now what you have is almost I think almost 46, 47 percent of the people of this country don’t pay any income taxes. Now to me, I gotta ask, is that fair? I mean I think everybody should have some skin in the game, even if it’s a dollar, we ought to have people willing to make sure, or making sure that they’re part of what we’re trying to do.” [YouTube.com, [11/10/11](#)]

Sen. Orrin Hatch: The Poor “Need To Share Some Of The Responsibility.” According to a transcript of Sen. Orrin Hatch’s (R-UT) speech on the Senate floor, “We wonder why the money doesn’t go far enough? When are we going to wake up and realize that the other side just spends and spends and spends. They want to tax and tax and tax so they can spend some more. My gosh. When are we going to wake up in this country and realize they are spending us into oblivion? I hear how they are so caring for the poor and so forth. The poor need jobs, and they also need to share some of the responsibility. We don’t want the very poor people who are in poverty to pay income taxes—but 51 percent of all households?” [Congressional Record, S4350, [7/6/11](#)]

Sen. Chuck Grassley: “56 Percent Of The Work- Eligible Adults On Welfare Are Reported As Not Working Or Not Doing Anything.” During a hearing of the Senate Finance Committee, Sen. Chuck Grassley stated, “Dr. Berlin, as you know, 56 percent of the work- eligible adults on welfare are reported as not working or not doing anything. A significant amount of TANF expenditures are unaccounted for. Congress and welfare stakeholders have no idea what these TANF dollars are being used to fund.” [Senate Finance Committee Hearing via Nexis, 9/21/10]

Sen. Pat Toomey: Safety Net Programs Will Provide “All The Things You Need, As Long As You Don’t Work Very Much.” According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, “Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.) took aim at federal spending Thursday, at one point singling out welfare programs he said had grown so generous that some Americans find they benefit from government aid ‘as long as you don’t work very much.’ [...] ‘We all want to have a safety net that works for the people who need us, but we’ve had a huge proliferation of these programs, we’ve had huge expansions in eligibility for these programs. We’ve had huge increases in funding for these programs, and the net effect now is that there are people who discover that the government will provide food, shelter, health care, education, transportation, cash, a very long list of all the things you need, as long as you don’t work very much, you don’t make very much,’ Toomey said. ‘It creates a huge economic disincentive.’ [...] Toomey, a leading voice among fiscal conservatives, acknowledged that he was treading on a politically sensitive topic, one he said was prone to distortion. But he said government aid had grown so generous that beneficiaries have to increase their income ‘enormously to offset what you’re going to lose in these benefits.’ ‘We should really have a debate about the impact that the cumulative effect of all these programs has on the very people they’re meant to help,’ he said.” [Philadelphia Inquirer, [3/9/13](#)]

GOP Has Repeatedly Passed Budgets That Slash The Safety Net For Working Americans While Cutting Taxes For The Rich And Big Corporations

In each of the past three years, House Republicans have approved budget proposals authored by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), who is currently the lead Republican negotiator in the bipartisan budget talks. Ryan made his name by introducing an extreme fiscal plan originally called the “Roadmap for America’s Future,” which is best known for privatizing Medicare and turning it into a voucher program. When he became chairman of the Budget Committee, Ryan’s ideas became the accepted policy of the GOP, and eventually propelled him to the vice presidential nomination in 2012.

FY 2014 BUDGET PLAN

House GOP’s 2014 Budget Plan Proposed To Cut Medicaid And CHIP By A Combined \$810 Billion Over A Decade. According to the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, “The House GOP plan again proposes sharp cuts to the Medicaid health program for the poor, tighter food stamp eligibility rules and claims \$1.8 trillion in savings over a decade by repealing Obama’s signature overhaul of the U.S. health care system. (A small share of these cuts could come from the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which the Ryan budget would merge into its new Medicaid block grant.) This would be an estimated cut to federal Medicaid and CHIP funding of about 21 percent over ten years relative to current law and comes on top of the loss of the significant additional funding that states are slated to receive under the Affordable Care Act to expand Medicaid coverage, and to extend their CHIP programs through 2015.” [CBPP, [3/27/13](#)]

House GOP’s 2014 Budget Privatizes Medicare, Turning It Into A Voucher Program And Shifting Costs Onto Patients. According to the Associated Press, “House Republicans unveiled their latest budget outline on Tuesday, sticking to their plans to try to repeal so-called Obamacare, cut domestic programs ranging from Medicaid to college grants and require future Medicare patients to bear more of the program’s cost. [...] For his part, Ryan has resurrected a controversial Medicare proposal that replaces traditional Medicare for those currently under 55 with a government subsidy to buy health insurance on the open market.” [Associated Press, [3/12/13](#)]

- **Budget Cuts Medicare Spending \$356 Over A Decade.** According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “The Ryan budget would cut Medicare spending by \$356 billion over the 2013 - 2023 period compared to CBPP’s current-policy baseline. It would save \$129 billion by repealing the Medicare benefit improvements in health reform (including closure of the prescription drug “donut hole”), limiting medical malpractice awards, and raising income-tested premiums. Ryan’s budget also includes \$138 billion in scheduled cuts from Medicare’s sustainable growth rate formula for physicians and \$89 billion in Medicare cuts from sequestration.” [CBPP, [3/15/13](#)]

Ryan Budget’s Unequal Tax Giveaways “Would Cost Nearly \$6 Trillion” And “Provide The Lion’s Share Of Their Benefits To High-Income Households And Corporations.” According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “The new budget from House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan proposes a series of dramatic tax cuts that would cost nearly \$6 trillion in lost federal revenue over the next decade (see Figure 1), and that would provide the lion’s share of their benefits to high-income households and corporations. But, despite its stated promise to the contrary, the budget does not include a plausible way to pay for it all. [...] These tax cuts would provide extremely large new tax cuts to wealthy Americans, even as Chairman Ryan’s spending cuts would fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable individuals and families.” [CBPP, [3/17/13](#)]

House GOP's 2014 Budget Proposes To Lower Tax Rates For The Wealthy And big Corporations.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "The budget sets a goal of cutting the top individual tax rate to 25 percent (from 39.6 percent) and it would repeal the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT), which is designed to ensure that high-income people pay at least a minimum level of tax. It would cut the corporate tax rate to 25 percent (from 35 percent) and greatly cut taxes on corporations' foreign profits. It also would repeal all of the revenue-raising measures of health reform (i.e., the Affordable Care Act or ACA), which are designed to help offset the cost of that law's health insurance coverage expansions." [CBPP, [3/17/13](#)]

Nearly All House Republicans Voted For GOP's 2014 Budget Plan. 221 Republicans voted in favor of the GOP's 2014 budget plan, while ten voted against the plan. No Democrats voted in favor. [H. Con. Res. 25, Vote #88, [3/21/13](#)]

All But Five Senate Republicans Voted For Plan. According to the Huffington Post, "The Senate has soundly rejected a balanced budget plan authored by House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan. Five Republicans joined every Democrat present to kill the measure, which failed on a 40-59 vote." [Huffington Post, [3/22/13](#)]

FY 2013 BUDGET PLAN

House GOP's 2013 Budget Would Have Cut Medicaid And Other Health Programs By \$770 Billion.

According to the New York Times, "Medicaid and other health programs would be cut \$770 billion." [New York Times, [3/30/12](#)]

2013 Budget Would Cut Medicare By \$205 Billion. According to the New York Times, "A fierce two-day debate over a Republican budget plan portrayed as either a path to prosperity or a road to ruin ended Thursday with House passage of a blueprint that would transform Medicare, cut domestic spending to levels not seen since World War II and order up a drastic overhaul of the tax code.[...] Medicare would be reduced by \$205 billion. [...] Medicare would be turned into a subsidized set of private insurance plans, with the option of buying into the existing fee-for-service program. The annual growth of those subsidies would be capped just above economic growth, well below the current health care inflation rate." [New York Times, [3/30/12](#)]

2013 Budget Would Cut Tax Rates For The Wealthy And Big Corporations, Eliminate Taxes On Foreign Profits, Repeal The AMT, And Cut An Obamacare Tax On The Wealthy. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "His budget would cut the top marginal income tax rate, now 35 percent but scheduled to rise next year to 39.6 percent, to 25 percent. It would cut the corporate income tax rate from 35 percent to 25 percent and eliminate taxes on the foreign profits of U.S.-based multinationals. It would eliminate the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT), designed to ensure that high-income people pay at least a minimum level of tax. And it would eliminate health reform's increase in the Medicare tax for high-income individuals." [CBPP, [3/22/12](#)]

Budget Also Proposed Making Bush Tax Cuts For The Wealthy Permanent. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "These tax cuts all would come *on top* of President Bush's tax cuts, which also are very expensive and tilted toward the nation's most affluent people and which Chairman Ryan would make permanent. The Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center (TPC) estimates that extending the Bush and other expiring tax cuts would cost \$5.4 trillion over the next decade and that Chairman Ryan's additional tax cuts would cost another \$4.6 trillion." [CBPP, [3/22/12](#)]

CBPP: 2013 Budget's Tax Giveaways "Would Disproportionately Favor The Nation's Highest-Income Households And Large Corporations." According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Despite warning that the nation faces the 'perils of debt,' House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan introduced a budget on March 20 whose tax proposals would be extremely costly and would disproportionately favor the nation's highest-income households and large corporations. [...] Chairman Ryan is proposing nearly \$10 trillion in tax cuts (relative to current law) that heavily favor high-income Americans even while claiming that his budget's severe cuts

in basic low-income programs like Medicaid, food stamps, and Pell Grants are needed to rein in unsustainable deficits.” [CBPP, [3/22/12](#)]

- **Estimate: Under Ryan Budget, Millionaires Would Get An Extra \$265,000 In Tax Cuts While Low-Income Families Would Pay More.** According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Even as House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan’s budget would impose trillions of dollars in spending cuts, at least 62 percent of which would come from low-income programs, it would enact new tax cuts that would provide huge windfalls to households at the top of the income scale. New analysis by the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center (TPC) finds that people earning more than \$1 million a year would receive \$265,000 apiece in new tax cuts, on average, *on top* of the \$129,000 they would receive from the Ryan budget’s extension of President Bush’s tax cuts. [...] After-tax incomes would rise by 12.5 percent among millionaires, but just 1.8 percent for middle-income households. Low-income working families would actually be hit with tax *increases*.” [CBPP, [4/12/12](#), internal citations removed]

Nearly All House Republicans Voted For Budget Plan. According to the New York Times, “The plan, which passed 228 to 191, with no Democratic votes and 10 Republican defections, will form the template around which much of the 2012 election will be fought.” [New York Times, [3/30/12](#)]

All But Five Senate Republicans Voted For Budget Plan. Forty-one senators, all Republicans, voted to proceed on the House Republican budget. Five Republicans joined all the Democratic senators in rejecting the measure. [H. Con. Res. 112, Vote # 98, [5/16/12](#)]

FY 2012 BUDGET PLAN

2012 Budget Plan Would Have Privatized Medicare And Raised Eligibility Age. According to the Washington Post, “Ryan’s budget, titled ‘The Path to Prosperity,’ would spend about \$40 trillion over the next decade — \$6.2 trillion less than the budget President Obama proposed in February. The bulk of the savings would come from federal health-care programs, starting with a repeal of Obama’s ambitious new initiative to expand coverage for the uninsured. Starting in 2022, Ryan also would end Medicare as an open-ended entitlement for new retirees and begin slowly raising the age of eligibility from 65 to 67. Instead of getting government-paid benefits, retirees could choose a private policy on a newly established Medicare exchange.” [Washington Post, [4/15/11](#)]

- **Plan Would Force Medicare Beneficiaries’ Out-Of-Pocket Spending To “Rise Dramatically.”** According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Moreover, CBO estimates that the total health care costs attributable to Medicare beneficiaries would be considerably *higher* under the private insurance plans they would purchase under the Ryan plan than under a continuation of traditional Medicare, because private plans have higher administrative expenses and higher payment rates for providers. Since the Ryan proposal would *reduce* the federal government’s contribution for beneficiaries’ health care costs even as it caused total costs to *increase*, beneficiaries’ out-of-pocket spending would rise dramatically. In 2022, the first year the voucher would apply, CBO estimates that total health care expenditures for a typical 65-year-old would be almost 40 percent higher with private coverage under the Ryan plan than they would be with a continuation of traditional Medicare. (See graph.) CBO also finds that this beneficiary’s annual out-of-pocket costs would *more than double* — from \$6,150 to \$12,500. In later years, as the value of the voucher eroded, the increase in out-of-pocket costs would be even greater.” [CBPP, [4/7/11](#)]

House GOP’s 2012 Budget Would Have Cut Medicaid By Over \$700 Billion Over A Decade. According to the Washington Post, “House Republicans approved a budget on Friday that would fundamentally alter Medicare and Medicaid, lower taxes on individuals and corporations and cut \$4.4 trillion from the nation’s deficit over the next decade. [...] Medicaid would come in for even sharper cuts, exceeding \$700 billion over the next decade. The GOP plan would end the financing partnership between the federal government and the states, replacing it with

block grants that give states less money and free them to manage the program as they wish.” [Washington Post, [4/15/11](#)]

Budget Would Slash CHIP Funding. According to The Hill, “The 2012 budget proposal released by House Republicans this week would slash funding for a popular children's healthcare program, leaving children's welfare advocates wondering where millions of low-income enrollees would turn for care. The GOP's 85-page budget blueprint doesn't mention the Children's Health Insurance Program, but CHIP would lose tens of billions of dollars under the proposal, which was unveiled Tuesday by House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.). While the Democrats' new healthcare reform law extended CHIP through 2019 — and expanded funding through 2015 — the Ryan budget blueprint would repeal most of the that law, including the CHIP language, according to Ryan spokesman Stephen Spruiell.” [The Hill, [4/8/11](#)]

2012 Ryan Budget Proposed “\$4.2 Trillion In Tax Cuts That Would Go Disproportionately To Those At The Top.” According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “That means that, despite proposing \$4.3 trillion in what would be the most severe and wrenching budget cuts in U.S. history — two-thirds of which would come from programs for people of low or moderate incomes — the plan barely reduces deficits at all over the next decade. That’s because his budget cuts are offset by \$4.2 trillion in tax cuts that would go disproportionately to those at the top. In essence, at least for the next decade, this plan is far less a blueprint for addressing deficits and far more a proposal to redistribute large amounts of resources from those at the bottom to those at the top.” [CBPP, [4/8/11](#)]

2012 Budget Would Make Bush Tax Giveaways And Top-Tier Estate Tax Cuts Permanent, And Cut The Top Tax Rate To 25 Percent. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “On the tax side, the Ryan plan would make permanent all of the Bush tax cuts for high-income Americans, as well as the striking estate-tax giveaway included in the December 2010 tax package that benefits the estates of only the wealthiest one-quarter of 1 percent of Americans who die, at a cost of tens of billions of dollars. The Ryan plan loses \$700 billion over ten years from making the high-end tax cuts permanent. People with incomes over \$1 million would receive average tax cuts of \$125,000 a year — or more than \$1 million over the coming decade — if these tax cuts are made permanent, according to the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. The \$125,000 figure does not include the additional tax cuts that high-income households would receive from the evisceration of the estate tax (or from additional cuts that people earning at least \$1million a year would receive from Ryan’s call to cut the top tax rate to 25 percent as part of revenue neutral tax reform).” [CBPP, [4/20/11](#)]

All But Four House Republicans Voted For 2012 Budget. According to the Washington Post, “All but four Republicans voted for Ryan’s 2012 budget blueprint, and every Democrat present voted against it, for a final tally of 235 to 193.” [Washington Post, [4/15/11](#)]

Most Senate Republicans Voted For House GOP’s 2012 Budget. Out of the 47 Republicans in the Senate in 2011, 40 voted to move forward on the House-passed 2012 budget. [H. Con. Res. 34, Vote #77, [5/25/11](#)]

Republicans Have Insisted On Major Cuts To Programs Middle-Class Americans Rely On While Protecting Tax Giveaways For The Wealthy

2011: THE “GRAND BARGAIN” AND THE DEBT CEILING

Bipartisan “Gang Of Six” Senators Embarked On Budget Negotiations. According to the Washington Post, “With President Obama calling for bipartisan talks to tackle the nation's budget problems, a group of influential senators from both parties is developing a framework that calls for higher taxes and caps on all categories of government spending. [...] The group, known informally as the ‘Gang of Six,’ began meeting soon after Obama's fiscal commission recommended an ambitious plan for deficit reduction last year.” [Washington Post, [2/17/11](#)]

“Gang” Attempted To “Address Tough Subjects Such As Taxes And Major Entitlement Reforms,” But Republicans Became “Wary Of Taxes.” Apart from its secrecy and a certain measure of what critics see as elitism, the Gang of Six's trademark has been a willingness to take on tough subjects such as taxes and major entitlement reforms, including Social Security. A major following has grown up in both parties, with nearly half the Senate turning out for an early morning meeting organized by [Sen. Tom] Coburn last winter and joining a letter-writing campaign this spring in support of the effort. But the White House and leaders in both parties have nervously watched for fear of losing control over the debate. As the months passed, Republicans have become wary of tax increases. Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee, has pressed hard on this point, and Coburn and the anti-tax activist Grover Norquist engaged in a high-profile debate on the revenue question.” [Politico, [5/17/11](#)]

Sen. Tom Coburn Quit “Gang” Over “Impasse,” Leaving Negotiations “In Tatters.” According to The Hill, “Sen. Tom Coburn's (R-Okla.) exit from the bipartisan Gang of Six budget talks has left hopes for a grand deficit-reduction deal in tatters. [...] Coburn's participation in the Gang of Six opened up the possibility that Republicans and Democrats might make painful concessions on tax increases and entitlement cuts to reach a comprehensive framework for deficit reduction. But Coburn's abrupt decision Tuesday to drop out of the talks, which he said had reached an unproductive ‘impasse,’ might have dealt a fatal blow to those aspirations.” [The Hill, [5/19/11](#)]

Vice President Biden Held Bipartisan Negotiations To Bridge Divides Over Spending Cuts And Revenue Increases. According to CNN “Vice President Joe Biden huddled behind closed doors with top congressional budget negotiators Thursday, seeking to bridge a cavernous partisan divide over taxes and spending before the federal government slams into its debt ceiling this summer. Biden and Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner met with, among others, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Virginia; Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii; Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-Montana; and Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Arizona, a top member of the Finance Committee. Maryland Rep. Chris Van Hollen and South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn -- both part of the House Democratic leadership -- also took part in the meeting. [...] Leaders of both parties are struggling to come up with a common deficit reduction strategy that won't alienate their political bases. Democrats have excoriated House Republicans for passing a fiscal year 2012 budget that the Democrats claim would undermine Medicare and shred seniors' economic safety net. Republicans, in turn, have blasted Obama's fiscal blueprint, claiming it lacks serious deficit reduction measures.” [CNN.com, [5/5/11](#)]

Republican Negotiators Abandoned Talks Over Taxes. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, “The drive for a major deficit-reduction deal entered a new phase Thursday when Republican negotiators pulled out of bipartisan talks, leaving it to President Barack Obama and House Speaker John Boehner to resolve the toughest issues. House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R., Va.) said he was backing out of the talks for now because the group had reached

an impasse over the question of whether tax increases should be included in the deal. The only other Republican in the group, Sen. Jon Kyl (R., Ariz.), soon followed suit, agreeing that only the highest levels of leadership could break the logjam between Democrats' demand that the budget deal include tax increases and Republicans' adamant opposition to that demand. The talks were aimed at striking a budget deal in hopes of easing the way for Congress to raise the government's \$14.29 trillion debt limit.” [Wall Street Journal, [6/24/11](#)]

Speaker Boehner Rejected “Grand Bargain” That Included 3:1 Ratio Of Spending Cuts To Tax Increases.

According to the Huffington Post, “House Speaker John Boehner is rejecting President Obama's offer to make historic cuts to the federal government and the social safety net, saying in a statement Saturday evening that he can not agree to the tax increases Democrats insisted on as part of the bargain. [...] Obama had proposed to Republicans a ‘grand bargain’ that accomplished a host of individual things that are unpopular on their own, but that just might pass as a huge package jammed through Congress with default looming. Obama offered to put Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid cuts on the table in exchange for a tax hike of roughly \$100 billion per year over 10 years. Meanwhile, government spending would be cut by roughly three times that amount. It's no small irony that the party's dogmatic opposition to tax increases is costing the GOP its best opportunity to roll back social programs it has long targeted.” [Huffington Post, [7/9/11](#)]

Speaker Boehner “Suddenly Broke Of Talks” Despite President Obama’s Concessions On Safety Net Programs.

According to the New York Times, “Negotiations over a broad deficit reduction plan collapsed in acrimony on Friday after Speaker John A. Boehner suddenly broke off talks with President Obama, raising the risk of an economy-shaking default. [...] Mr. Obama said Mr. Boehner had stopped returning his calls when it became clear that rank-and-file House Republicans would not agree to raise revenues on wealthy Americans as part of a debt-reduction deal, despite Mr. Obama’s concessions on reducing future spending for Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security. Both sides have sought a deficit-reduction agreement as part of the essential vote to raise the government’s \$14.3 trillion debt limit, which will be reached Aug. 2. In a letter to his Republican colleagues on Friday night, Mr. Boehner said, ‘A deal was never reached, and was never really close.’ He added: ‘In the end, we couldn’t connect. Not because of different personalities, but because of different visions for our country.’” [New York Times, [7/23/11](#)]

To Avoid Default, President Obama And Congressional Republicans Agreed Deal That Slashed Spending Without “Any Immediate Revenue Additions Or Tax Increases.”

According to the Huffington Post, “Congressional leaders and President Obama on Sunday night announced they've cut a deal to avert a historic U.S. default, saying they have assembled a framework that cuts some spending immediately and uses a ‘super Congress’ to slash more in the future.” According to CBS News, “The compromise does not include any immediate revenue additions or tax increases.” [Huffington Post, [7/31/11](#); CBS News, [8/1/11](#)]

- **Agreement Created Debt-Reduction “Super Committee” And Set The State For Mandatory Spending Cuts Known As “Sequestration.”** According to Business Insider, “President Barack Obama and Congressional leaders announced they have reached a ‘historic, bipartisan compromise’ to raise the debt limit and lower the deficit. The debt ceiling will be hiked in two stages the first with cuts agreed to now, and the second with cuts agreed to by a ‘Super Committee’ of congressmen. If the second round of cuts were not agreed to, mandatory spending cuts, or ‘sequestration,’ would take effect on programs sacred to both Democrats and Republicans.” [Business Insider, [7/31/11](#)]

Super Committee Failed To Reach An Agreement After Republicans Insisted On Lowering The Deficit “Largely By Reducing Spending On Medicare And Other Domestic Programs.”

According to the Los Angeles Times, “Unable to break the partisan stalemate over taxes and Medicare, the congressional ‘super committee’ came to a quiet close as the co-chairs issued a statement saying no deal could be reached by the panel's deadline. [...] The committee faced a Wednesday deadline to vote on a proposal to slash the nation's deficits by \$1.5 trillion over the decade. The panel that was brought into existence as a result of the summer debt ceiling fight spent three months in mostly secret negotiations. A deal needed to be posted by Monday evening to provide a 48-hour

review. But Republicans and Democrats were unable to compromise on the tax and spending issues that have divided Congress all year, punting the debate to next year's presidential and congressional campaigns. Republicans refused to substantially raise taxes and wanted to cut federal deficits largely by reducing spending on Medicare and other domestic programs. Democrats wanted a more equal balance of new taxes and spending cuts -- a level of taxation the GOP could not accept." [Los Angeles Times, [11/21/11](#)]

2012: THE FISCAL CLIFF

Speaker Boehner Responded To President Obama's Invitation To Negotiate Over "Fiscal Cliff" By Calling For Extension Of Tax Giveaways For The Wealthy. According to the Washington Times, "After sending signals this week that compromise was possible, both Barack Obama and John Boehner on Saturday reiterated their opposing positions on Saturday, with the president insisting on higher taxes on the wealthy and the Republican House speaker calling for tax code reform and overall lower tax rates. President Obama, who has invited Mr. Boehner and other congressional leaders to join him in the White House next week to begin looking for a way to avoid the 'fiscal cliff,' the series of automatic spending cuts and tax hikes set to kick in at the end of the year, said part of that solution will require higher taxes for those making more than \$250,000. [...] Mr. Boehner and Republicans support extending the Bush tax cuts. The White House supports the extension on income under \$250,000, but wants to see higher rates rise on income above that level." [Washington Times, [11/10/12](#)]

President Obama And Speaker Boehner Entered One-On-One Budget Negotiations. According to the New York Times, "At House Speaker John A. Boehner's request, Senate leaders and Representative Nancy Pelosi have been excluded from talks to avert a fiscal crisis, leaving it to Mr. Boehner and President Obama alone to find a deal, Congressional aides say. All sides, even the parties excluded, say clearing the negotiating room improves the chance of success. It adds complexity as the two negotiators consult separately with the leaders not in the room. But it also minimizes the number of people who need to say yes to an initial agreement. [...] White House aides and the speaker's staff, by mutual agreement, have largely shut down public communication about the talks to avert hundreds of billions of dollars in automatic tax increases and spending cuts set to begin in January if no deal can be reached. Both sides said on Thursday that lines of communication remained open." [New York Times, [12/6/12](#)]

President Obama And Speaker Boehner Reportedly Neared A Deal, But Faced Resistance From House Republicans. According to the Washington Post, "President Obama and House Speaker John A. Boehner moved close to agreement Monday on a plan to avert the year-end 'fiscal cliff,' but they had yet to clear several critical hurdles, including winning the support of wary House Republicans. [...] People in both parties said the next few days could prove critical: Either Obama and Boehner will reach a consensus and sell it to their respective parties, or talks will again collapse, leaving congressional leaders scrambling for a fallback plan to mitigate the economic damage from more than \$500 billion in automatic tax increases and spending cuts scheduled to begin immediately after Dec. 31. [...] Of particular concern to negotiators is the conservative wing of Boehner's caucus, which has been boisterous in its opposition to tax increases of any kind. [Washington Post, [12/17/12](#)]

Negotiations "Hit A Standstill" Over Income Threshold For Tax Cuts, Leading Boehner To Introduce "Plan B." According to the Huffington Post, "Negotiations over resolving the so-called fiscal cliff have hit a standstill as top Obama administration officials say they have not had formal talks with House Speaker John Boehner's office since Monday. The officials, who briefed reporters on the condition that they not be quoted, flatly rejected the speaker's latest proposal to fully extend the Bush-era tax rates for income under \$1 million. [...] The latest chapter began on Monday, when the White House put out a third offer to House Republicans. It included raising the income level for tax increases to \$400,000 from \$250,000 as well as \$800 billion in savings -- including \$290 billion in interest savings, \$100 billion in defense cuts and \$130 billion in savings from adjusting the inflation index for Social Security benefits. It also included roughly \$80 billion in unemployment insurance and infrastructure spending. Officials were hopeful that Boehner would work off that plan. Instead, the speaker trotted out a 'Plan B,'

which called for millionaires to pay more in income taxes, but did not address issues like unemployment insurance, the impending sequester cuts and expiring tax extenders.” [Huffington Post, [12/19/12](#)]

Boehner Canceled Vote On His Plan “After Failing To Find Enough GOP Support” And Punted Responsibility To President Obama. According to the Los Angeles Times, “House Speaker John A. Boehner abruptly canceled a vote on his Plan B tax proposal late Thursday after failing to find enough GOP support, a stunning political defeat that effectively turned resolution of the year-end budget crisis over to President Obama and the Democrats. The speaker had spent the last few weeks negotiating one-on-one with the president, establishing himself as the second-most powerful figure in Washington. But with his strategy imploding, Boehner conceded that he would play a lesser role. ‘Now it is up to the president,’ he said, to work with a fellow Democrat, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, ‘to avert the fiscal cliff.’ The proposal the speaker had hoped to bring to a vote would have prevented a year-end tax increase for all but those earning more than \$1 million a year. But the Ohio Republican said in a statement, ‘It did not have sufficient support from our members to pass.’” [Los Angeles Times, [12/21/12](#)]

WSJ: “The Problems Lay In Mr. Boehner’s Inability To Coax His Rank-And-File To Support A Deal That Raises Taxes On Higher-Income Americans.” According to the Wall Street Journal, “Congressional leaders and President Barack Obama called Friday for a return to negotiations to avert the so-called fiscal cliff, a day after talks cratered in a very public fashion when Republicans abandoned House Speaker John Boehner’s backup plan. [...] A review of the negotiations, based on interviews with a dozen aides and lawmakers, suggests the problems lay in Mr. Boehner’s inability to coax his rank-and-file to support a deal that raises taxes on higher-income Americans. Another factor was what Republicans saw as President Obama’s unwillingness to bend when a deal was in sight, jamming the speaker with a deal his party couldn’t swallow.” [Wall Street Journal, [12/21/12](#)]

Congress Passed A Fiscal Cliff Deal That “Left A Host Of Issues Unresolved And Guaranteed Continued Budget Clashes.” According to the Wall Street Journal, “Congress broke a rancorous stalemate Tuesday to pass legislation designed to avert the so-called fiscal cliff. But the compromise bill, which blocked most impending tax increases and postponed spending cuts largely by raising taxes on upper-income Americans, left a host of issues unresolved and guaranteed continued budget clashes between the parties. [...] The House voted 257-167, with 172 Democrats joining 85 Republicans in supporting the measure. Voting against the bill were 151 Republicans, and the GOP leadership split over the issue: House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R., Va.) voted against it, while House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio) voted for it.” [Wall Street Journal, [1/2/13](#)]

2013: THE SEQUESTER AND THE BUDGET CONFERENCE

Speaker Boehner Told Republicans He Would No Longer Negotiate With President Obama. According to The Hill, “Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) is signaling that at least one thing will change about his leadership during the 113th Congress: he’s telling Republicans he is done with private, one-on-one negotiations with President Obama. During both 2011 and 2012, the Speaker spent weeks shuttling between the Capitol and the White House for meetings with the president in hope of striking a grand bargain on the deficit. Those efforts ended in failure, leaving Boehner feeling burned by Obama and, at times, isolated within his conference. In closed-door meetings since leaving the ‘fiscal cliff’ talks two weeks ago, lawmakers and aides say the Speaker has indicated he is abandoning that approach for good and will return fully to the normal legislative process in 2013 — seeking to pass bills through the House that can then be adopted, amended or reconciled by the Senate.” [The Hill, [1/2/13](#)]

The Sequester Kicked In As Republicans Continued To Oppose Any New Revenues To Replace Spending Cuts. According to USA Today, “President Obama called Democratic and Republican senators over the weekend, seeking a compromise to end the sweeping, across-the-board spending cuts now taking effect, the president’s top economic adviser said Sunday. But neither side showed signs of relenting, as the latest Washington budget battle threatened furloughs for federal workers and cuts to government services coast-to-coast. The so-called sequester

kicked in Friday night and requires federal agencies to make \$85 billion in spending cuts through the Sept. 30 end of the federal fiscal year. [...] Neither side appeared close to compromise to end the stalemate — the latest in the budget standoff between the White House and congressional Republicans that has dominated Washington for the past two years. In the interview that aired Sunday, Boehner reiterated his opposition to including any new tax revenue in a deal to roll back the cuts. ‘The president got his tax hikes,’ he said, pointing \$620 billion in tax increases approved last year. ‘The issue here is spending.’ [USA Today, [3/4/13](#)]

After Senate Passed A Budget, House Republicans Rejected Conference Committee With Senate Democrats. According to the Washington Post, “House Republicans have no plans to appoint a conference committee to hammer out a budget deal with Senate Democrats, Rep. Paul Ryan said Tuesday, arguing that the move is pointless unless private talks bring the two sides closer to agreement. [...] Democrats quickly accused Ryan of hypocrisy, noting that he and other Republicans have for months criticized President Obama for negotiating ‘backroom deals’ with congressional leaders over tax and spending policies. Republicans passed their own spending plan in March and then badgered Senate Democrats to adopt their first budget blueprint since 2009 so Congress could return to the more transparent legislative process to reconcile their fiscal differences, a process known as ‘regular order.’” [Washington Post, [4/16/13](#)]

Senate Republicans Blocked Majority Leader Harry Reid’s Attempt To Establish A Budget Conference Committee. According to The Hill, “Senate Republicans on Tuesday prevented Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) from setting up a budget conference. Reid sought the Senate’s unanimous consent to form a budget conference committee aimed at reconciling the wildly different House and Senate budget resolutions, but Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) objected. [...] A Republican aide said there was no reason to create a conference because President Obama won’t drop his demand for tax increases.” [The Hill, [4/23/13](#)]

In Total, Republicans Blocked Budget Conference 19 Times. According to National Journal:

For instance, through a Senate Democratic aide, here are all the times since this spring Senate Democrats tried to negotiate with Republicans by sending their budget to a bicameral conference committee. Every time, Republicans blocked the move:

1. 4/23 Senator Reid requested unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator Toomey blocked.
2. 5/6 Senator Reid requested unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator Cruz blocked.
3. 5/7 Senator Murray requested unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator McConnell blocked.
4. 5/8 Senator Warner asked unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator McConnell blocked.
5. 5/9 Senator Murray asked unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator McConnell blocked.
6. 5/14 Senator Warner asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator McConnell blocked.
7. 5/15 Senator Wyden asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator McConnell blocked.
8. 5/16 Senator Murray asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator Lee blocked.
9. 5/21 Senator Murray asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator Paul blocked.
10. 5/22 Senator Kaine asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator Rubio blocked.
11. 5/23 Senator McCaskill asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator Lee blocked.
12. 6/4 Senator Murray asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator Rubio blocked.
13. 6/12 Senator Kaine asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator Lee blocked.
14. 6/19 Senator Murray asked unanimous consent to go to conference, and Senator Toomey blocked.
15. 6/26 Senator Murray requested unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator Cruz blocked.
16. 7/11 Senator Murray requested unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator Marco Rubio blocked.
17. 7/17 Senator Murray requested unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator Mike Lee blocked.
18. 8/1 Senator Durbin requested unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator Marco Rubio blocked.
19. 10/2 Senator Murray requested unanimous consent to go to conference, Senator Toomey blocked.

[National Journal, [10/7/13](#)]

Congressional Republicans Support The Harmful Sequester – Or Think It Should Have Gone *Even Further*

Sen. Ted Cruz On The Sequester: Republicans “Finally Got The First Small Step—And I Underscore, It Is A Small Step—To Reigning In Our Uncontrollable Spending And Debt.” According to a speech Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) gave at the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference, “Sequestration has actually gone into effect. [...] The White House was certain that Republicans were going to fold under and cave and instead we stood our ground and finally got at least the first small step –And I underscore, it is a small step—to reigning in our uncontrollable spending and debt.” [Cruz Speech via C-Span, [3/16/13](#)]

Rep. Cynthia Lummis On The Sequester: “I Am Excited...It Will Be The First Time Since I’ve Been In Congress That We Really Have Significant Cuts.” According to the Billings Gazette, “U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., told both chambers of the state Legislature on Monday that federal ‘spending cuts are coming.’ The cuts are the automatic \$1.6 trillion in reductions known as sequestration. For the past month, Republican congressional members set on reducing the nation’s debt have been hinting that the cuts will trigger March 1. For Lummis, it’s more than speculation. ‘Sequestration will take place,’ she told lawmakers in the State Capitol. [...] ‘I am excited,’ Lummis said. ‘It will be the first time since I’ve been in Congress that we really have significant cuts.’” [Billings Gazette, [2/11/13](#)]

Rep. Mark Meadows On The Sequester: “I Think The Cuts Are Helping Us.” According to Businessweek, “But a small group of House conservatives, new to Washington and aligned with the Tea Party, argue the sequester has been good for the economy. They want to leave it in place to keep slimming down the government. ‘I think the cuts are helping us,’ says Representative Mark Meadows, a freshman from North Carolina.” [Businessweek, [8/29/13](#)]

Rep. Tim Huelskamp On The Sequester: “We Got What We Set Out To Do In Changing Washington.” According to The Washington Post, “But many Republicans say the sequester is the moment when the tea party can claim it has made its mark. Although Democratic and Republican leaders are pointing fingers, the tea party and its allies are happily accepting credit for the cuts. ‘This will be the first significant tea party victory in that we got what we set out to do in changing Washington,’ said Rep. Tim Huelskamp (Kan.), a tea party Republican elected in 2010.” [Washington Post, [2/25/13](#)]

Rep. Mark Meadows On The Sequester: “I Think The Cuts Are Helping Us.” According to Businessweek, “But a small group of House conservatives, new to Washington and aligned with the Tea Party, argue the sequester has been good for the economy. They want to leave it in place to keep slimming down the government. ‘I think the cuts are helping us,’ says Representative Mark Meadows, a freshman from North Carolina.” [Businessweek, [8/29/13](#)]

Rep. Kevin Brady: The Sequester Is “Absolutely Necessary.” According to an interview Rep. Kevin Brady(R-TX) gave host Tyler Mathisen on CNBC’s Power Lunch:

MATHISEN: I assume that you believe that there is no prospect of a deal to avert these government spending cuts that will kick in as of midnight of tomorrow night. Is that necessarily a bad thing?

BRADY: No, it really isn’t. In fact, I think it is absolutely necessary.

[C-Span, Power Lunch, [2/28/13](#)]

Rep. Paul Broun: “I’m In Favor Of The Sequester Going Into Place.” According to the Cherokee Tribune, “Traveling across Georgia to tout his candidacy for the U.S. Senate, Republican Rep. Paul Broun said Friday that he sees \$100 billion in automatic budget cuts as Washington’s only realistic option for trimming spending. Even with the Pentagon warning that the cuts would devastate the military, Broun said: ‘I want to see it go into place.’ ‘It’s the only way that we’re going to get any positive spending cuts, and I’m in favor of the sequester going into place,’ Broun said in an interview Friday as he stopped in Savannah.” [Cherokee Tribune, [2/9/13](#)]

Rep. Scott DeJarlais: “Sequestration Needs To Happen.” According to the Cleveland Daily Banner, “U.S. Rep. Scott DeJarlais met with local constituents Thursday afternoon at the Bald Headed Bistro in the Village Green to discuss the upcoming issues in the House of Representatives. [...] ‘Sequestration needs to happen. There’s still time to balance those cuts across government rather than having the military hit so hard, and Medicare and some of the other entitlements. Bottom line, it needs to happen and that’s the deal we struck to raise the debt limit,’ he said.” [Cleveland Banner, [2/1/13](#)]

Sen. Pat Toomey On The Sequester: “We’ve Got To Make These Cuts.” According to NBC News, “Another fiscal conservative, Sen. Pat Toomey, R –Pa., said Tuesday, ‘The magnitude of the spending cuts -- it’s very important that they be preserved and not be delayed. The willingness to go ahead with them will send a constructive message to our citizens, to the markets.’ He added, ‘I think they’re badly designed; I think too much of them lands on our defense budget and the nature of the across-the-board cuts precludes a more thoughtful way of prioritizing. But given the disastrous fiscal situation we’re in, we’ve got to make these cuts.’” [NBC News, [2/27/13](#)]

Rep. Jim Jordan: The Sequester Is “One Of The Good Things That Has...Happened.” According to the transcript of an interview Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) gave on Fox News Sunday, Jordan stated, “I don’t think you’re going to see House Republicans -- I mean we -- we are best when we stay united on -- on basic principles of less government, less spending, keeping taxes low. You’re going to see us stay united, that we are not going to increase spending. We’re -- the sequester has been one of the -- one of the good things that has -- that has happened. It’s one of the few things we have done where we’ve actually controlled spending somewhat in this town.” [Fox News Sunday, Fox News, [10/13/13](#)]

Rep. Renee Ellmers On The Sequester: “I Do Believe It Will Start A Very Important Process That Will Help Our Economy Start To Grow.” According to The Washington Post, “Rep. Renee L. Ellmers (N.C.), who is part of the 2010 class of Republicans but not a member of the tea party caucus, said she worries about the sequester, especially since her district, home to Fort Bragg, would be hit hard. But she said it may have to happen. ‘I do believe it will start a very important process that will help our economy to start to grow,’ she said.” [Washington Post, [2/25/13](#)]

Sen. Orrin Hatch: “I’m For Sequestration.” According to The Salt Lake Tribune, “Sen. Orrin Hatch told the Utah Legislature Wednesday that forced belt tightening is going to happen and that he supports so-called sequestration for getting spending under control — though the immediate impacts of such large cuts will likely hurt national defense. [...] ‘I’m for sequestration,’ Hatch said, if Congress can’t cut spending. ‘We’ve got to face the music now, or it will be much tougher later.’” [Salt Lake Tribune, [2/20/13](#)]

Rep. Steve Scalise On Sequester: “That’s A Big Win, To Finally Stand Firm On Cutting Spending.” According to The New York Times, “For Mr. Boehner, the consequences of allowing the sequester to take effect could be less damaging than the consequences of going back on his promise not to allow any new tax revenues. [...] But for now Mr. Boehner seems not only to have engendered the good will of his conference but also to have locked in place the spending cuts Republicans have been fighting for. ‘That’s a big win, to finally stand firm on cutting spending,’ Mr. Scalise said.” [New York Times, [2/28/13](#)]

Sen. Rand Paul: The Sequester Cuts Are “A Pittance.” According to an interview Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) gave host Wolf Blitzer on CNN:

PAUL: I voted against the sequester because I didn't think it cut enough. [...]

BLITZER: So you don't think that the \$85 billion this year, the forced cuts this year, from your perspective, that's not enough?

PAUL: It's a pittance.

[YouTube.com, [2/19/13](#)]

Rep. Mike Pompeo Said The Sequester Would Be A Political “Home Run.” According to an interview Rep. Mike Pompeo gave Politico's Jake Sherman at a post-State of the Union Address event:

SHERMAN: Not concerned with the political fall-out, it doesn't seem like, of the sequester taking hold.

POMPEO: It's going to be a home run. We're doing what the American people asked the United States House of Representatives to do in 2010, when I came here. We are reducing the size and scope of the federal government.”

[Politico, [2/23/13](#)]

Sen. Tom Coburn: “There Is A Lot Of Unity Among Senate Republicans To Preserving The Sequester This Year.” According to the Wall Street Journal, “President Obama has made ending the sequester caps next year a top priority in budget negotiations with Congress. But he'll have a hard time convincing Republican Sen. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma. [...] Mr. Coburn insists the cuts are here to stay and that he has plenty of allies in Congress. ‘There is a lot of unity among Senate Republicans to preserving the sequester this year,’ he says.” [Wall Street Journal, [2/6/13](#)]

Rep. Mick Mulvaney: “We Want To Keep The Sequester In Place And Take The Cuts We Can Get.” According to The Wall Street Journal, “President Barack Obama this week called for Congress to reach agreement on what he called a ‘balanced approach’ to dealing with the sequester, which would include more precise spending cuts and increased revenues. Senate Democrats are coalescing around an idea to hit people earning more than \$1 million a year with a tax increase to offset part of the scheduled spending reductions. ‘That's a non-starter with us,’ said Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R., S.C.), a member of the House Budget Committee, and an increasingly prominent fiscal hawk. ‘We want to keep the sequester in place and take the cuts we can get.’” [Wall Street Journal, [2/8/13](#)]

Rep. Reid Ribble: The Sequester Is “Small But Appropriate And Necessary.” During an interview with Wisconsin Public Television, Rep. Reid Ribble (R-WI) stated, “So as it relates to sequester, revenues are off the table from my perspective, but I recognize that you're not going to solve this country's fiscal crisis without some level of revenue. However, American people are skeptical, because they always see the tax increases, but they never see any restraint on federal spending. In fact, in my two years in Congress, this is the first legitimate effort that we've had to try to bring some fiscal restraint into how the government is managing its finances, and I think the step is a small but appropriate and necessary one to highlight the fact that our social services, our mandatory spending in this country, is now squeezing out necessary resources on other priorities that we have.” [WPT.org, [2/28/13](#)]

Rep. Marsha Blackburn: Sequester Cuts Are “A Good, Solid Step.” According to an interview Rep. Marsha Blackburn gave on Fox Business, “At least what we have is a continuing resolution that recognizes the reductions that were made, the spending reductions that were made through sequestration. So that is, that's a good, a good solid step.” [Fox Business via YouTube.com, [3/21/13](#)]

Rep. Thomas Massie On The Sequester: “If This Is The Only Way To Curb Spending, Then I’m Fine With It.” According to Businessweek, “Representative Thomas Massie, who arrived in Congress last November after winning a special election, agrees. ‘I didn’t create the sequester,’ he says, ‘but if this is the only way to curb spending, then I’m fine with it.’ [...] Massie says House Republican leaders approached him in July to ask if he’d be willing to vote to kill the sequester if Democrats agreed to long-term entitlement cuts. Massie said no, mostly because he doesn’t believe they’d offer cuts deep enough to make the trade worth it. The sequester is doing the job just fine: ‘We’ve done it,’ he says, ‘and the world is still rotating on its axis.’” [Businessweek, [8/29/13](#)]

THE SEQUESTER IS HURTING SENIORS AND THOSE IN NEED

A Sequester Cut To Medicare Part B Caused Thousands Of Seniors Seeking Cancer Treatment To Be Turned Away From Clinics. According to The Washington Post, “Cancer clinics across the country have begun turning away thousands of Medicare patients, blaming the sequester budget cuts. Oncologists say the reduced funding, which took effect for Medicare on April 1, makes it impossible to administer expensive chemotherapy drugs while staying afloat financially. Patients at these clinics would need to seek treatment elsewhere, such as at hospitals that might not have the capacity to accommodate them. [...] Medications for seniors are usually covered under the optional Medicare Part D, which includes private insurance. But because cancer drugs must be administered by a physician, they are among a handful of pharmaceuticals paid for by Part B, which covers doctor visits and is subject to the sequester cut.” [Washington Post, [4/3/13](#)]

Survey: 70 Percent Of Meals On Wheels Programs Are Reducing The Number Of Meals They Serve Because Of The Sequester. According to the Meals On Wheels Association of America, “To quantify the impact of these impending reductions, the Meals on Wheels Association of America conducted a brief survey of 640 member programs that currently receive funding through the Older Americans Act. [...] Planning ahead over the next six-months, most programs are creating or adding to wait lists, while nearly 70% mentioned reducing the number of meals served per week. One in two respondent programs plan to cut the number of seniors served, with almost 40% citing fewer meals served. Forty percent reported the need to cut staff and about 17% indicated plans to shut down programs altogether.” [Meals On Wheels Association of America, [June 2013](#)]

Sequester Cuts To All Federally Funded Public Housing Authorities “Have Resulted In Fewer Housing Vouchers For The Elderly, Disabled, And Low-Income Residents.” According to the Sun Journal, “Officials started bracing for cuts last fall, imposed as part of the Budget Control Act of 2011. In January, all federally funded public housing authorities were subject to 5 percent cuts. Those cuts, coupled with the continuing budget resolution to freeze spending at 2012 levels, have resulted in fewer housing vouchers available for elderly, disabled and low-income residents.” [Sun Journal, [9/12/13](#)]

Roughly 300,000 Poor Families Are Not Receiving Heating Or Cooling Assistance For Their Homes Due To The Sequester. According to the a press release from the National Energy Assistance Directors’ Association, “The National Energy Assistance Directors’ Association (NEADA) representing the state directors of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) reported that FY 2013 sequester cut about 300,000 from receiving heating or cooling assistance. The sequester reduced total funding during this period by about \$155 million from \$3.47 billion to \$3.32 billion.” [NEADA.org, [11/14/13](#)]

Weekly Unemployment Checks Are Cut By An Average Of 15 Percent For Millions Of People Nationwide. According to US News & World Report, “A new analysis shows the federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation program – which provides benefits to long-term unemployed Americans – will be cut by \$2.4 billion, impacting millions of unemployed Americans. The National Employment Law Project analysis finds that the EUC program provides an average weekly benefit of \$289 before sequestration reductions. Sequestration will take \$43, or nearly 15 percent, out of that average weekly check. However, the monthly benefit cuts will be much steeper in some states, inching above \$200 or even \$300 per month.” [US News & World Report, [7/3/13](#)]

THE SEQUESTER IS WEAKENING NATIONAL SECURITY

Defense Secretary: Sequester Cuts To DOD Will Cause “The Size, Readiness And Technological Superiority Of Our Military” To Be “Reduced.” According to a letter written by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to the Chairman and the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, “I realize, however, that the Department of Defense (DoD) needs a contingency plan in the event that the sequester-level budgetary caps currently imposed by the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 remain in effect. These caps would lead to an approximately \$52 billion cut to the DoD budget compared to the President’s FY 2014 funding request, as well as deep cuts to non-defense priorities including education, infrastructure, innovation and more. [...] I strongly oppose cuts of that magnitude because, if they remain in place for FY 2014 and beyond, the size, readiness and technological superiority of our military will be reduced, placing at much greater risk the country’s ability to meet our current national security commitments.” [Bloomberg.com, [7/10/13](#)]

Army Official: Sequestration Has Already Hindered Training For Army. According to Politico, “‘If we go to a continuing resolution plus sequestration — which is what we’re planning — it’s going to significantly reduce our ability to train again this year,’ warned Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno. ‘So the worst case scenario is, you ask me to deploy thousands of soldiers somewhere, and we have not properly trained them to go, because we simply don’t have the dollars and money because of the way sequestration is laid out that it makes it more difficult.’ Sequestration has already meant that as of this week, only two of its 42 combat brigades are fully trained and ready, Odierno warned.” [Politico, [10/28/13](#)]

The Sequester Is Threatening The Army’s Funding For Developing And Purchasing Weapons And Equipment. According to Politico, “Now, the Army’s funding to develop and buy weapons — everything from missiles to trucks to helicopters — is under increased pressure. And as resources shrink, the Army is resetting its sights. In an interview with POLITICO, the Army’s head of acquisition, Heidi Shyu, ticked off the new priorities. ‘There are a lot of things we’d like to have, but that we may not be able to afford in the current fiscal environment,’ she said. [...] The Army’s account that funds acquisition — and research and development — is under intense pressure, she said, because it’s the only area of the budget that can generate quick savings. Unlike the Navy or the Air Force, the biggest piece of the Army’s budget is its people, not equipment. After that, comes the service’s operations and maintenance account. But neither can deliver savings quickly enough to keep up with sequestration’s budget caps.” [Politico, [10/28/13](#)]

Air Force Official: “The Air Force, After Sequestration, Is Going To Be Smaller, Less Capable, Less Ready And Less Flexible—That’s The Bottom Line.” According to CNNMoney, “At the Pentagon, another year of sequester would mean that Air Force couldn’t afford four or five of the 19 F-35 fighter jets requested for 2014, principal deputy Air Force secretary William LaPlante told a congressional panel last week. ‘The Air Force, after sequestration, is going to be smaller, less capable, less ready and less flexible -- that’s the bottom line,’ LaPlante said.” [CNNMoney, [10/31/13](#)]

Marine Official: If Sequestration Continues, The Marines “Will Have To Shrink Its Force,” And May Suffer “More Casualties.” According to the Army Times, “‘We are headed towards a force in not too many years that will be hollow back home and not ready to deploy,’ Marine Commandant Gen. James Amos said. ‘And if they do deploy, they will enter harm’s way, we’ll end up with more casualties.’ Specifically, Amos said the Corps can no longer afford its longstanding target size of 186,800 Marines and will have to shrink its force to about 174,000. At that level, he said, Marines will be unable to meet expectations under the Defense Department’s current national security strategy. ‘Under sequestration, we will effectively lose a Marine division’s worth of combat power. This is a Marine Corps that would deploy to a major contingency, fight and not return until the war was over. We will empty the entire bench,’ he said.” [Army Times, [11/7/13](#)]

Navy Official: “We Will Be Slipping Behind In Capability” If Sequestration Cuts Continue. According to the Army Times, “Lawmakers heard a similar warning from Adm. Jonathan Greenert, the chief of naval operations.

'You have to be there with confident and proficient people. And if they're not confident and proficient, then you're talking more casualties,' Greenert said. 'We will be slipping behind in capability, reduced force structure and reduced contingency response.' Greenert offered details of the Navy's new plans for absorbing the sequestration cuts that included dropping the target fleet size to 260, down from previous plans to reach 300 ships by 2020. Those reductions would mean shedding one or two carrier strike groups and one or two amphibious ready groups." [Army Times, [11/7/13](#)]

The FBI Has Stopped Training New Agents, And If The Sequester Continues, Will Have To Furlough Employees. According to CNNMoney, "FBI Director James Comey said last month that his agency stopped training new agents at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va. When the new round of sequester rolls out, the FBI would have to cut \$800 million from its budget, and instead of hiring, it will have to furlough employees. 'That cupboard is bare. I can't avoid it this year,' Comey said." [CNNMoney, [10/31/13](#)]

650,000 Defense Department Employees Went Without Pay For Six Days Due To Sequester Furloughs. According to CNNMoney, "Defense Department furloughs forced Laurie Vroman to skip her student loan payments, clip coupons and turn to family for financial support. For Vroman, a normal bi-weekly paycheck puts \$984 in the bank, after taxes and benefits. Furloughs trimmed \$142 from each paycheck, bringing her take-home down to \$842. [...] Vroman was among the 650,000 federal defense workers who went without pay for six days this summer due to some \$85 billion in federal spending cuts. The furloughs for defense workers ended last week, but the trimmed paychecks lag an extra week for many, since federal workers are paid every other week." [CNNMoney, [8/22/13](#)]

THE SEQUESTER IS HARMING EDUCATION

An Estimated 57,000 Children Are Being Denied Placement In Head Start Due To A \$400 Million Sequester Cut. According to USA Today, "Last year about 1 million of the nation's poorest children got a leg up on school through Head Start, the federal program that helps prepare children up to age five for school. This fall, about 57,000 children will be denied a place in Head Start and Early Head Start as fallout from sequestration. New estimates about the automatic budget cuts were released Monday by the federal government. The cuts have slashed over \$400 million from the federal program's \$8 billion budget. [...] Children will lose 1.3 million days of service at Head Start centers and more than 18,000 employees will be laid off or see their pay reduced." [USA Today, [8/20/13](#)]

Sequester Cuts To Special Education Programs Are Affecting Up To 300,000 Students. According to USA Today, "The U.S. Department of Education estimates the sequester cut about \$579 million in federal funding for IDEA Part B, which supports students age 3-21 with specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, intellectual disabilities, autism or emotional disturbances. The National Education Association estimates that if states and local school systems did not replace any of the funds lost through sequestration, nearly 300,000 students receiving special education services would be affected. [...] It is unknown how many states or schools districts will replace some or all of that money from other sources, such as new tax revenues or cuts to other programs. But they may hesitate to replace federal funding even if they have the resources. That's because by law, states and school districts that raise their funding for special education and then later reduce it, after adjusting for enrollment and other factors, can see their funding from the federal government cut." [USA Today, [9/10/13](#)]

Sequestration Has Forced School Districts On Military Bases And Native American Reservations To Eliminate Arts And Culture Programs And Is Threatening Early Childhood Education, Career Education, And Music Classes. According to the Huffington Post, "Because schools that serve students who live on military bases and Native American reservations don't have the level of local property taxes that fund most public schools, they get special federal funding known as impact aid. [...] Things are about to get worse, according to a survey released this week by the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools. For the current school year, the group heard back from 298 school districts in 42 states. [...] Fifty-four reduced programs, with the arts and cultural

offerings often the first to go. [...] If sequestration continues, the pain for school districts dependent on impact aid will worsen. Minnewaukan Public Schools in North Dakota would likely be forced to cut its early childhood education program entirely. Career education programs and music classes may go next.” [Huffington Post, [10/22/13](#)]

Less Federal Aid Is Now Available For College Students And More Aid Could Be Cut In The Future If Sequester Continues. According to NBC News, “The sequester is also cutting federal spending on various programs to help students pay the higher costs of a degree. Because Congress and the White House continue to haggle over the budget cuts, students getting financial aid letters will need to take those numbers with a grain of salt. But unless Congress makes changes, college-bound students can expect to pay higher origination fees on loans and see smaller grants from various programs. For those most reliant on aid, the sequester could cost as much as \$876 a year, according to the Student Aid Alliance. Those cuts include military tuition assistance, federally supported work-study programs and so-called Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants for low-income students. (Pell grants – which helped roughly a third of all college students in 2011-2012 - were spared this year, but could be cut in the future.)” [NBC News, [3/20/13](#)]

THE SEQUESTER IS HARMING SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL RESEARCH

NIH: The Sequester Is “Delaying Progress” On Development Of Cancer Drugs, A Universal Flu Vaccine And Treatments For Common And Rare Diseases. According to the National Institutes of Health’s website, “The sequestration requires NIH to cut 5 percent or \$1.55 billion of its fiscal year (FY) 2013 budget. NIH must apply the cut evenly across all programs, projects, and activities (PPAs), which are primarily NIH institutes and centers. This means every area of medical research will be affected. [...] Therefore, cuts to research are delaying progress in medical breakthroughs, including: development of better cancer drugs that zero in on a tumor with fewer side effects, research on a universal flu vaccine that could fight every strain of influenza without needing a yearly shot. Prevention of debilitating chronic conditions that are costly to society and delay development of more effective treatments for common and rare diseases affecting millions of Americans.” [NIH.gov, Accessed [11/14/13](#)]

Hundreds Of Scientists And Researchers Are Being Laid Off Because Federal Grants Are Harder To Win. According to CNNMoney, “It took a few months, but forced federal budget cuts are costing hundreds of science and medical research jobs. Nearly half of the recipients who get federal science funding say they’ve recently laid off or will lay off scientists and researchers, because federal grants are tougher to win, according to a survey by the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and 15 other scientific societies. [...] These are just some of the cuts underway thanks to \$85 billion in forced spending cuts, called sequester, that kicked in March 1. And as more research grants don’t get renewed, the layoffs will get worse, experts say.” [Money.CNN.com, [9/3/13](#)]

Another Year Of Sequestration Cuts Would Delay NASA Research, Halt Sending Astronauts To Mars, And Postpone Large-Scale Missions To Retrieve An Asteroid. According to Florida Today, “Earlier this year, top NASA officials warned that another year of sequestration would be bad news for an agency that budgets for the long term and needs consistent funding sources for its multi-year missions. William Gerstenmaier, associate administrator for human exploration, told senators that large-scale missions to retrieve an asteroid and send astronauts to Mars will be delayed if sequestration continues. [...] Another year of sequestration also will stunt research programs at Dryden Flight Research Center in California, Langley Research Center in Virginia, and Glenn Research Center in Ohio, Nelson said. He confirmed he’s talked to NASA Administrator Charles F. Bolden Jr. about the issue. ‘It will affect every center. It will also put the kibosh on (NASA’s) aviation research,’ he said. ‘Sequestration is across the board. It hits everybody. That’s why we need to get rid of it.’” [Florida Today, [10/28/13](#)]

Sequester Cuts Are Causing Universities To Delay Research Projects. According to the Huffington Post, “Federal budget cuts known as sequestration have carved a chunk out of their respective budgets and threaten the fabric of publicly funded scientific research, the university presidents and chancellors explained at a news conference. After less than a year under this reality, the impacts have begun to show. A survey of 74 public and private universities released in coordination with the press conference revealed that 70 percent delayed research projects or experienced reductions in the number of new grants.” [Huffington Post, [11/12/13](#)]

THE SEQUESTER IS KILLING JOBS AND DAMAGING THE ECONOMY

New York Times: In July, “Wages And Salaries Tumbled \$21.8 Billion...With A Third Of The Decline Coming From Forced Furloughs Of Federal Workers.” According to The New York Times, “After rising 0.3 percent in June, income was held back in part by steep government spending cuts that reduced federal workers’ salaries. Overall wages and salaries tumbled \$21.8 billion from June, with a third of the decline coming from forced furloughs of federal workers.” [New York Times, [8/31/13](#)]

CBO: Eliminating The Sequester Could Add Over 1 Million Jobs And 1.2 Percent To GDP In 2014. According to a report released by the Congressional Budget Office, “This letter provides an analysis of how a cancellation of the automatic spending reductions specified by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (Public Law 112-25) would affect the U.S. economy. Pursuant to that act, federal spending in 2013 has been subject to across-the-board cuts, also referred to as sequestration. [...] The full ranges CBO uses for those parameters suggest that, in the third quarter of calendar year 2014, real GDP could be between 0.2 percent and 1.2 percent higher, and employment 0.3 million to 1.6 million higher, under the proposal than under current law.” [CBO, [7/25/13](#)]

Goldman Sachs: The Federal Government May Lose 100,000 Jobs In 2014 If The Sequester Continues. According to The Washington Post, “The federal government may lose 100,000 jobs next year if Congress does not reverse the automatic spending cuts known as the sequester, according to an analysis from the Goldman Sachs investment-banking firm.” [Washington Post, [9/16/13](#)]

Bipartisan Policy Center: The Economic Impact Of The Defense Industry Sequester Will Double In Fiscal Year 2014 And Triple In Fiscal Year 2015. According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, “The impact of the defense sequester on spending, which drives the economic impact, will double in Fiscal Year (FY) 14 and triple in FY 15, compared to FY 13.” [Bipartisan Policy Center, [October 2013](#)]

- **Defense Trade Group: The Sequester Could Force The Defense Industry To “Lay Off Thousands Of Employees.”** According to CNNMoney, “Many companies continue doing work for the U.S. government, based on contracts awarded years ago, defense experts say. But that's about to change, warned the Aerospace Industries Association, a trade group for big defense contractors. ‘The Pentagon will not have the option of using prior-year unobligated funds,’ the group warned in a sequester report released on Thursday. ‘Investment shortfalls of this scale and immediacy . . . will, over the next several years, force the defense industry to lay off thousands of employees.’” [CNNMoney, [10/18/13](#)]

Moody’s: Sequester Cuts Could Put The Credit Ratings Of Research Universities At Risk. According to Inside Higher Ed, “The squeeze that research universities are feeling because of federal budget cuts may put their credit ratings at risk, Moody’s Investor Services said Friday. The rating agency did not formally change its outlook on research universities but did warn that the budget reductions, known as sequestration, are a negative development for the creditworthiness of those institutions. ‘Increasing pressure on federal research funding is credit negative for research universities, especially those with less-established records that will likely be less successful in securing grants in the current strained environment,’ Moody’s wrote in its weekly credit outlook report.” [InsideHigherEd.com, [11/18/13](#)]

Grinch Congress: As The Holidays Approach, Republicans Maintain Resistance To Helping The Unemployed

1.3 Million Jobless Americans Could Lose Benefits In December If Emergency Unemployment Program Expires As Scheduled. According to NBC News, “This New Year’s Eve, unlike last year, Congress doesn’t face a ‘fiscal cliff’ deadline to approve a must-pass tax or spending bill. But one group does stand to suffer if Congress doesn’t take action before the end of the year: Americans who get benefits under an emergency unemployment compensation program President George W. Bush signed into law in 2008. Unless Congress intervenes to keep that program alive, it will expire on Dec. 28, leaving about 1.3 million unemployed people without benefits.” [NBC News, [11/19/13](#)]

WSJ: “Democrats Are Pushing To Extend Emergency Unemployment Benefits...But They Are Already “Running Into Resistance From Republicans.” According to the Wall Street Journal, “Democrats are pushing to extend emergency unemployment benefits beyond their expiration at the end of December, but they are already running into resistance from Republicans on an issue that has divided the parties for several years. House and Senate Democrats on Wednesday introduced legislation that would extend the current program that offers extra benefits to the long-term unemployed for an additional year. The extended benefits would cost roughly \$25 billion, according to Democrats’ estimates. The White House has signaled it supports the initiative. The temporary Emergency Unemployment Compensation program began in 2008 during the height of the financial crisis and has been repeatedly extended. Democrats say that if the program is not extended at the end of December, roughly 1.3 million Americans searching for jobs will lose these benefits and another 1.9 million would lose benefits in the first half of 2014 as their benefits expire.” [Wall Street Journal, [11/20/13](#)]

CBPP: “During Recessions And While Unemployment Remains High During Recoveries, The Federal Government Has Historically Created Temporary, Wholly Federally Funded Programs Providing Further Weeks Of Benefits.” According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “During recessions and while unemployment remains high during recoveries, the federal government has historically created temporary, wholly federally funded programs providing further weeks of benefits. Congress created the most recent such program, Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC), in June 2008; the latest reauthorization continues the program through the end of 2013. Some states also may offer additional benefits under separate state-funded programs. [CBPP, [2/6/13](#)]

Huffington Post: Extending Benefits “Has Recently Become A Painful Annual Ritual...With Republicans Lamenting The Cost.” According to the Huffington Post, “Since World War II, Congress has always given extra weeks of federal unemployment benefits to workers who use up the standard six months of state jobless compensation. Reauthorizing the benefits has recently become a painful annual ritual, however, with Republicans lamenting the cost of the extension and Democrats insisting the federal government has never left workers hanging with the national unemployment rate above 7.2 percent.” [Huffington Post, [11/15/13](#)]

IN THE WAKE OF THE BUSH RECESSION, CONGRESSIONAL GOP OPPOSED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND JOBS PROGRAMS

October 2009: Democratic Leaders Attempted Twice To Pass An Extension Of Unemployment Benefits “Only To Be Rebuffed By Republicans On The Senate Floor.” According to the Washington Independent,

“Democratic leaders, who twice this month have attempted to pass the extension, only to be rebuffed by Republicans on the Senate floor. It’s also left a growing number of jobless Americans and their advocates indignant that lawmakers would make political hay out of their misfortunes in the middle of the worst employment crisis in a generation.” [Washington Independent, [10/26/09](#)]

February 2010: Sen. Jim Bunning “Single-Handedly” Blocked A Senate Bill To Extend Unemployment Benefits. According to the Huffington Post, “Jim Bunning, a Republican from Kentucky, is single-handedly blocking Senate action needed to prevent an estimated 1.2 million American workers from prematurely losing their unemployment benefits next month. As Democratic senators asked again and again for unanimous consent for a vote on a 30-day extension Thursday night, Bunning refused to go along.” [Huffington Post, [2/26/10](#)]

- **In Response To Sen. Jeff Merkley’s Pleas For Him Drop His Objection, Jim Bunning Said, “Tough Shit.”** According to Politico, “In a colloquy with Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), Sen. Jeff Merkley, a freshman Democrat from Oregon, was pleading for Bunning to drop his objection, when the Kentucky Republican got fed up. ‘Tough s—t,’ Bunning said as he was seated in the back row, overheard by the floor staff and others in attendance.” [Politico, [2/25/10](#)]

March 2010: Sen. Tom Coburn Blocked Another Extension Of Unemployment Insurance In March 2010. According to The Hill, “Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) has blocked passage of a crucial package of expiring provisions, including extended unemployment insurance benefits that are scheduled to run out on April 5. Coburn has balked at Democrats’ request for unanimous consent to pass the extensions, threatening a standoff similar to one that pitted Sen. Jim Bunning (R-Ky.) against the Democratic leadership last month.” [The Hill, [3/26/10](#)]

- **The Hill: “That Impasse Halted Benefits To 200,000 Unemployed People” In One Week.** According to The Hill, “Coburn and other Republicans are already blocking a \$9 billion bill to extend jobless benefits for 30 days that isn’t offset with other spending cuts. That impasse halted benefits to 200,000 unemployed people this week.” [The Hill, [4/6/10](#)]

May 2010: Senate GOP Blocked Extension Of Temporary Assistance For Needy Families Fund. According to the Huffington Post, “On Tuesday, Senate Republicans (and four Democrats) defeated a \$1.3 billion measure that extends funding until March 2011 for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Fund. ... Those lawmakers explained their opposition by saying that the amendment was not paid for and will increase the budget deficit. It was the second time in two weeks that Republicans pitted deficit reduction against the poor and unemployed -- last week, Sen. Jim Bunning (R-Ky.) obstructed an unemployment benefits extension. The Senate also defeated \$1.3 billion for a stimulus-created summer jobs program.” [Huffington Post, [5/10/10](#)]

June 2010: Sen. Orrin Hatch Introduced Legislation Requiring Unemployment Recipients Be Drug Tested. According to The Salt Lake Tribune, “People seeking unemployment benefits or welfare would have to first pass a drug test under a proposal Sen. Orrin Hatch will try to add to legislation extending the social safety net during this time of economic turmoil. Hatch, R-Utah, said his idea would help battle drug addiction and could reduce the nation's debt. He will try to get the Senate to include his amendment to a \$140 billion bill extending tax breaks and social programs this week. ‘This amendment is a way to help people get off of drugs to become productive and healthy members of society, while ensuring that valuable taxpayer dollars aren't wasted,’ he said after announcing his amendment. ‘Too many Americans are locked into a life of a dangerous dependency not only on drugs, but the federal assistance that serves to enable their addiction.’” [Salt Lake Tribune, [6/15/10](#)]

June 2010: “An Effort To Revive Extended Unemployment Benefits” Was Blocked By “A Republican-Led Filibuster.” According to NPR, “An effort to revive extended unemployment benefits that expired last month was blocked on the Senate floor Thursday by a Republican-led filibuster. Nearly 1 million people who had been receiving extended unemployment benefits have lost them due to the congressional inaction; Senate Republicans,

joined by one Democrat, Nebraska's Ben Nelson, voted to block a measure that would have extended those benefits until December.” [NPR, [6/24/10](#)]

- **NPR: “The Rejected Bill Would Also Have Provided \$16 Billion In New Aid To States, Preserving The Jobs Of Thousands Of State And Local Government Workers.”** According to NPR, “The rejected bill would also have provided \$16 billion in new aid to states, preserving the jobs of thousands of state and local government workers and providing what White House officials called an insurance policy against a double-dip recession.” [NPR, [6/24/10](#)]
- **NPR: “The Demise Of The Bill Means That Unemployment Benefits Will Phase Out For More Than 200,000 People A Week.”** According to NPR, “The demise of the bill means that unemployment benefits will phase out for more than 200,000 people a week. Governors who had been counting on federal aid will now have to consider a fresh round of budget cuts, tax increases and layoffs of state workers.” [NPR, [6/24/10](#)]

July 2010: Senate Republicans Filibustered An Extension Of Unemployment Benefits “For The Third Time In As Many Weeks.” According to the Associated Press, “For the third time in as many weeks, Senate Republicans on Wednesday successfully filibustered a bill to continue providing unemployment checks to millions of people.” [AP, [7/1/10](#)]

- **More Than A Million People Had Their Unemployment Checks Cut Off Because Of Republican Obstruction.** According to NPR, “The House of Representatives voted this afternoon to extend benefits to out-of-work Americans for six months, but the measure is stalled in the Senate in a fight over deficits. Since that fight began around Memorial Day, more than a million people have had their unemployment checks cut off. And NPR's David Welna reports that the stall will continue as Congress leaves town for the holiday recess.” [NPR, [7/1/10](#)]

July 2010: President Obama Signed A Law Extending Unemployment Benefits Through November. According to CNNMoney, Millions of jobless Americans are getting their unemployment benefits back. Hours after the House voted Thursday to push back the deadline to file for extended unemployment benefits until the end of November, President Obama signed the measure into law. The approval came a day after the Senate voted 59 to 39 to restore the payments, ending a seven-week stalemate. Some 2.9 million people were scheduled to run out of benefits by the end of the week. The jobless stopped getting their checks in early June, after Congress failed to extend the deadline to apply for unemployment insurance.” [CNNMoney, [7/22/10](#)]

September 2010: Sen. Mike Enzi Blocked Reauthorization Of TANF Emergency Fund. According to the Huffington Post, “Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) on Tuesday tried to push a three-month extension of a stimulus bill jobs program that is set to expire on Thursday, jeopardizing tens of thousands of jobs. Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) objected. [...] The program is an ‘Emergency Fund’ created by the stimulus bill to help states subsidize jobs for poor parents via the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (formerly known as welfare). The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has estimated that the TANF Emergency Fund has created more than 240,000 jobs.” [Huffington Post, [9/29/10](#)]

November 2010: House Republicans “Torpedoed A Bill To Extend Benefits For The Long-Term Unemployed” In November. According to the Wall Street Journal, “House Republicans Thursday torpedoed a bill to extend benefits for the long-term unemployed, pressing their demand that the \$12 billion cost of continuing the program be offset rather than adding to the deficit. In a defeat for Democrats trying to keep the program from expiring Nov. 30, the House rejected a bill to continue the program for three more months.” [Wall Street Journal, [11/19/10](#)]

- **Failure Of The Bill Meant “800,000 Unemployed Workers Will Lose Their Benefits By Nov. 30 And Two Million By The End Of November.”** According to the Wall Street Journal, “Lawmakers in both parties expect a compromise eventually to be reached—but not until December, after the current program expires. Without an extension, 800,000 unemployed workers will lose their benefits by Nov. 30 and two million by the end of December. A similar lapse in benefits occurred last summer as Congress struggled to break another impasse.” [Wall Street Journal, [11/19/10](#)]

December 2010: Unemployment Benefits Expired, With Republicans Vowing To Block All Legislation Until Bush Cuts Were Extended. According to the Christian Science Monitor, “The lame-duck Congress, mired in a partisan clash over taxes and spending and preoccupied with a battle over extending the Bush tax cuts, refused Wednesday to restore federal financing of extended unemployment benefits, which had lapsed overnight. The inaction means the imminent loss of unemployment compensation for some 800,000 out-of-work Americans, with nearly 2 million long-term unemployed expected to be affected by Jan. 1, according to the Labor Department. [...] Senate Republicans stepped up the pressure on tax cuts this week by signing a letter pledging to block all legislation on the floor until Congress resolves how to fund government for the current fiscal year and extend the 2001 and 2003 Bush tax cuts, now set to expire on Dec. 31.” [Christian Science Monitor, [12/1/10](#)]

- **Republicans Refused To Allow The Measure To Extend Unemployment Benefits To Get To The Senate Floor For Consideration.** According to the Christian Science Monitor, “Efforts in the Senate to extend the unemployment benefits were trapped in a procedural wrangle and never allowed on the floor for consideration. It fell to Sen. Scott Brown (R) of Massachusetts to object on behalf of the Republican Party to one proposed measure that required unanimous consent to move to the floor.” [Christian Science Monitor, [12/1/10](#)]

President Obama And Congressional Republicans Reached Deal That Would Extend Bush Tax Cuts And Renew Unemployment Benefits. According to the National Journal, “President Obama on Monday announced a ‘framework for a bipartisan agreement’ with congressional Republicans that would extend all Bush-era income tax cuts for two years in exchange for a grab bag of tax cuts and incentives favored by the White House. [...] Republicans agreed in principle to a host of items—a payroll-tax cut in 2011, extending unemployment insurance 13 months, a two-year patch for the alternative minimum tax, and an expanded schedule for business expensing—in exchange for a two-year extension of all reduced income tax rates and lower rates on capital gains and dividends, White House officials said.” [National Journal, [12/6/10](#)]

February 2011: House Republicans Blocked Legislation That Would “Provide Another 14 Weeks Of Federally-Funded Unemployment Benefits For People Who've Been Out Of Work For Six Months Or Longer.” According to the Huffington Post, “Republicans in the House of Representatives blocked legislation early Thursday morning that would provide additional benefits to the long-term unemployed. The House is currently debating a ‘continuing resolution’ that will fund government operations through Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year, in lieu of a formal budget. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) attempted to amend the CR with her provision to provide another 14 weeks of federally-funded unemployment benefits for people who've been out of work for six months or longer.” [Huffington Post, [2/17/11](#)]

October 2011: “Unemployment Benefits For 6 Million Americans Are AT Risk Now That The U.S. Senate Has Rejected President Obama’s Jobs Bill.” According to CNN, “Unemployment benefits for 6 million Americans are at risk now that the U.S. Senate has rejected President Obama's jobs bill. The Senate voted 50-49 in favor of the bill late Tuesday. But the measure failed to receive the 60 votes needed to advance the \$447 billion plan. This dismissal, while not altogether unexpected, still comes as a grave disappointment to the millions of unemployed Americans who have been waiting for Congress to do something other than trade barbs over their job creation plans. Now, the jobless are expecting to see their unemployment checks start to disappear come January. More than 6 million Americans are set to lose federal unemployment benefits in 2012, with 1.8 million running out in January alone, according to new figures from the National Employment Law Project.” [CNN, [10/24/11](#)]

February 2012: Republicans Rejected A Democratic Proposal To Cut Unemployment Benefits To 93 Weeks, Insisting The Benefits End After “A Maximum Of 59 Weeks.” According to the Christian Science Monitor, “On Thursday, Republicans on the panel rejected a new Democratic proposal to cut federal unemployment insurance from its current 99 weeks to 93 weeks. Republicans propose cutting back insurance to a maximum of 59 weeks. Meanwhile, Democrats dismissed two GOP proposals aimed at making the plan more palatable for tea party conservatives wary of government spending. One was to require people receiving unemployment benefits to work toward a high school diploma by enrolling in a GED program. The other was to give states the option to require drug testing for recipients.” [Christian Science Monitor, 2/9/12]

- **Rep. Tom Reed Suggested Limiting Benefits To 26 Weeks.** ‘Democrats are not willing to allow states the flexibility they need to give people tools to be reemployed,’ says freshman Rep. Tom Reed (R) of New York. A strong advocate for these provisions, Congressman Reed says he’s now prepared to send unemployment benefits back to a 26-week level. ‘The president says that the economy is good, so it must be time to go back to 26 weeks,’ he added. Is that the view he sees of the economy back home in upstate New York? ‘No,’ he adds. ‘I question the president’s numbers, but it’s time to take him at his word.’” [Christian Science Monitor, 2/9/12]

September 2012: “Eager To Shoot Down President Obama’s Legislative Agenda,” Republicans Filibustered Legislation “That Would Have Provided \$1 Billion Over Five Years To Help Veterans Find Work.” According to the New York Times, “Eager to shoot down President Obama’s legislative agenda just weeks before the election, Senate Republicans on Wednesday blocked a measure that would have provided \$1 billion over five years to help veterans find work in their communities.” [New York Times, 9/19/12]

- **The Veterans Jobs Corps Bill Would Have “Potentially Created Jobs For Up To 20,000 Veterans.”** According to the New York Times, “The measure, which would have potentially created jobs for up to 20,000 veterans, was blocked on a procedural point by Republicans, who argued that the bill was unpaid for. Senator Patty Murray, a Washington Democrat and the bill’s main sponsor, said the bill would have covered the costs in part with fees on Medicare providers and suppliers who are delinquent on their tax bills.” [New York Times, 9/19/12]
- **“An Unidentified Republican” Placed A “Secret Hold” On The Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA) Increase For Department Of Veterans Affairs Benefits, “Which Typically Passes The House And Senate Without Opposition”** According to the Daily Beast, “In what appears to be an election-year stunt that quickly backfired, an unidentified Republican senator on Thursday briefly blocked disabled veterans and their survivors from getting a cost-of-living adjustment to their benefits, according to Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. The Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, which typically passes the House and Senate without opposition, was cleared by Senate Democrats but placed on a ‘secret hold’ Thursday by an unidentified Republican senator, Murray says. [Daily Beast, 9/27/12]

January 2013: Unemployment Benefits Were Extended For One Year As Part Of Fiscal Cliff Deal.

According to the Washington Post, “The deal to which the House gave final approval late Tuesday will head off the most severe effects of the ‘fiscal cliff’ by averting a dangerous dose of austerity but still leaves the economy vulnerable to both immediate and more distant threats. [...] Despite the drawbacks, the bipartisan deal may well have been the heaviest lift a deeply divided Congress could have accomplished. And the package, no doubt, has its benefits. It is likely to prevent the nation from dipping back into recession. It cancels massive tax increases facing middle-class and poor Americans. And it delays deep and blunt government spending cuts for two months. And while the agreement does nothing to reduce joblessness, it renews unemployment benefits that would have otherwise expired, offering vital help to the jobless and averting another blow to economic activity. [Washington Post, 1/1/13]