



BUDGET BULLETIN

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Appropriations Status Report: 2016 Budget and Spending Bills

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EDITOR'S NOTE: All years are fiscal years unless otherwise stated. Figures in tables are rounded to the nearest millions of dollars unless otherwise noted.

The Budget and Allocations

In Congress, the budget resolution sets the broad outlines for the 12 annual appropriation bills. For the first time in six years, a budget resolution passed both houses of Congress in May, empowering the 2016 concurrent resolution, [S. Con. Res. 11](#), to serve as the fiscal framework for the Senate and House Appropriations committees.

The Appropriations committees in both chambers have produced legislation based on the budget's guidelines. With the Senate Appropriations Committee's approval of the Financial Services bill on July 23, all 12 Senate and House spending bills are now reported—again a first in six years.

The 2016 budget authorizes \$1.1 trillion for discretionary programs, to be provided by the Appropriations committees. The regular discretionary total matches the [Congressional Budget Office baseline](#) and [Budget Control Act of 2011](#) (BCA; P.L. 112-25) limit for the year—a slight increase from 2014 and 2015. The budget also includes a separate \$96 billion allocation for overseas contingency operations (OCO), new to the Senate.

The Appropriations committees distribute the discretionary allocation to their subcommittees through sub-allocations known as 302(b)s, named for the provision in the [Budget Act of 1974](#) (P.L. 93-344) requiring them. During the process of drafting individual appropriation bills, these

allocations are sometimes [adjusted](#) to ensure prioritization while staying within the limits imposed by the budget resolution.

In addition, the allocations are adjusted for emergencies, disasters, and program-integrity funding per the [Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985](#) (P.L. 99-177 as amended through P.L. 113-93). Funds designated as belonging to these categories receive adjustments to allocations during floor consideration and to discretionary spending limits upon enactment.

The following table shows how these adjustments will affect 2016 Senate 302(b) allocations:

2016 Senate 302(b) Allocations (Budget Authority/BA)*

(\$ Millions)					
Subcommittee	Base**	Emergencies	Disasters	Program Integrity	Total
Agriculture	20,510	-	-	-	20,510
Commerce/Justice/Science	51,068	-	-	-	51,068
Defense	576,000	-	-	-	576,000
Energy/Water	35,368	-	-	-	35,368
Financial Services	20,556	-	-	-	20,556
Homeland	40,373	-	6,713	-	47,086
Interior	30,010	1,055	-	-	31,065
Labor/HHS/Ed	153,188	-	-	1,561	154,749
Legislative	4,309	-	-	-	4,309
MilCon/VA	77,573	-	-	-	77,573
State/Foreign	48,268	-421	-	-	47,847
Transportation/HUD	55,646	-	-	-	55,646
Total	1,112,869	634	6,713	1,561	1,121,777

*Reflects committee actions through July 15, 2015, and allocation adjustments that will be made when a bill is pending on the Senate floor.

**Includes OCO.

Appropriations Status

The Senate Appropriations Committee has reported all 12 spending bills, which are now awaiting floor debate. A [June 18 Senate vote](#) on the [Defense Appropriations Act](#) failed to receive the 60 votes necessary to invoke cloture.

The House Appropriations Committee also has reported all 12 bills, completing the last one for Homeland Security on July 14. The full House so far has approved six of the 12: Commerce, Justice & Science; Defense; Energy & Water; Legislative Branch; Military Construction & Veterans; and Transportation & HUD (Housing and Urban Development).

Status of 2016 Appropriations

Subcommittee	Senate		House	
	Reported	Passed	Reported	Passed
Agriculture	✓		✓	
Commerce/Justice/Science	✓		✓	✓
Defense	✓		✓	✓
Energy/Water	✓		✓	✓
Financial Services	✓		✓	
Homeland	✓		✓	
Interior	✓		✓	
Labor/HHS/Ed	✓		✓	
Legislative	✓		✓	✓
MilCon/VA	✓		✓	✓
State/Foreign	✓		✓	
Transportation/HUD	✓		✓	✓

In the Senate, consideration of appropriation bills has stalled amid a debate on funding levels that shows no signs of abating. President Barack Obama's budget request, as submitted by the White House Office of Management and Budget, was \$76 billion above BCA levels. This additional funding was to be divided as \$38 billion apiece for defense and domestic discretionary spending. Congress did not approve the president's request in the budget resolution.

Nevertheless, during Senate committee consideration of appropriations bills, minority members have offered amendments that seek spending levels in line with the president's numbers, each of which has failed on a party-line vote. In addition, the minority has blocked appropriations bills [from coming to the Senate floor](#). Instead, minority members are demanding legislation to increase discretionary spending limits along the lines of the [Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013](#) (P.L. 113-67), setting the stage for possible [negotiations this fall](#).

Meanwhile, in the House, a dispute over [Interior appropriations](#) is impeding progress. In addition, the threat of a [presidential veto](#) looms should appropriation legislation pass using spending levels outlined by the budget resolution. Considering that passing the full set of appropriation legislation can take nearly a year [under a unified federal government](#), in the current political environment it will be that much more difficult to complete the appropriations process.

Differences Between Senate and House Appropriation Levels

Although both chambers must work within the same budgetary limits, there are several differences between the Senate and House both in allocations and appropriations. The following table shows the differences in amounts currently provided in reported or passed appropriation bills:

Differences in Total Appropriation Levels (BA)*

(\$ Millions)			
Subcommittee	Senate	House	Difference
Agriculture	20,510	20,648	-138
Commerce/Justice/Science	51,068	51,374	-306
Defense	575,999	578,647	-2,648
Energy/Water	35,368	35,402	-34
Financial Services	20,556	20,250	306
Homeland	47,086	46,046	1,040
Interior	31,065	30,170	895
Labor/HHS/Edu	154,749	154,536	213
Legislative	4,309	3,337	972
MilCon/VA	77,573	76,588	985
State/Foreign	47,847	47,834	13
Transportation/HUD	55,646	55,269	377
Total	1,121,776	1,120,101	1,675

*Reflects current status of appropriations as of July 23, 2015.

The principal difference between the Senate and House is in defense funding. The House provides more OCO funds in the Defense bill than the Senate, which instead directs those funds to the State/Foreign Operations bill. In the Homeland Security bill, the Senate provides \$880 million more in regular BA (for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Coast Guard, Homeland Security headquarters consolidation, and the Transportation Security Agency), plus an additional \$160 million for the Coast Guard designated as OCO. In the Military Construction/Veterans Affairs bill, the Senate provides \$437 million more than the House for VA construction, \$408 million more for military construction, and \$101 million more for VA information technology systems. In the Interior measure, the Senate provides \$1.055 billion in emergency spending for wildfire suppression that is not in the House bill.

In percentage terms, the largest gap appears to be in the Legislative Branch measure, in which the House is over 25 percent below the Senate—the 2015 total (\$4.3 billion)—and the House’s own 302(b) allocation (\$4.3 billion). This is because the House excludes Senate items. Adjusting for that discrepancy based on the Senate-reported bill, the final numbers come into close alignment and are virtually unchanged from prior-year levels.

Finally, there is a jurisdictional difference for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), a \$250 million agency. The House places the CFTC under Agriculture, while the Senate has it folded into Financial Services, accounting for most of the difference for both bills.