

THE NATIONAL SECURITY AND JOB PROTECTION ACT

courtesy of: the Office of the Majority Leader

SUMMARY:

1. Provides that upon enactment of H.R. 5652, the Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act of 2012 **or** similar legislation that offsets the cost of the automatic across-the-board defense and non-defense discretionary spending cuts scheduled to occur on January 2, 2013, the sequester for Fiscal Year 2013 is repealed.
2. Requires that by October 15, 2012, the President submit a plan to replace the January 2, 2013 sequester with other savings.

BACKGROUND & NEED:

In just over 100 days, an automatic across-the-board cut will take effect, eliminating funding for national defense and important domestic programs by as much as 10 percent. There is bipartisan agreement that the sequester would undercut key responsibilities of the federal government. As the Obama Administration makes clear in their own budget, "By design, the sequester is not good policy and is meant to force Congress to take action... Cuts of this magnitude done in an across-the-board fashion would be devastating both to defense and non-defense programs."

The sequester is part of the "fiscal cliff" that economists predict, if left unaddressed, will push our economy into a recession.

To date, only Republicans in the House have put forward a proposal to responsibly deal with this looming threat.

On May 10, 2012, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 5652 the "Sequester Replacement Reconciliation Act of 2012." This bill would replace the across-the board cuts that would devastate our military and other domestic programs such as law enforcement with common-sense reforms to mandatory spending. While President Obama has said he would veto this bill, he hasn't put forward an alternative. Similarly, Senate Majority Leader Reid has refused to bring up the House-passed proposal or offer one of his own. A letter from Republican leaders to President Obama offering to work together has gone unanswered.

This bill requires the President to submit a plan and makes clear that if the President opposes the House Republican plan, we are prepared to work with him on alternatives that would achieve the same goal of replacing the sequester and protecting our troops, our national security, important domestic programs, and our fragile economy.

Q. & A.:

Why does the bill lower the discretionary cap for FY 2013 to \$1,028 billion on January 2nd?

This is the same level as established by the budget adopted by the House. And, if Congress does not fix the sequester spending will be cut to \$950 billion.

Is that inconsistent with the 6-month CR at \$1,047 that has been agreed to by House Republicans?

No, House Republicans have always maintained that we would revisit the spending levels included in the temporary CR. This bill is consistent with that position and the House Republican budget.

Isn't this bill unnecessary since if there was agreement on a way to replace the sequester then that bill would include language to turn off the 2013 sequester?

This bill does two things. First it requires the President to submit a plan – something he has failed thus far to do. Second, it makes clear that either the House-passed reconciliation bill or another bill that achieves a similar level of savings is sufficient to replace the sequester. House Republicans are demonstrating that we are open to any solution that achieves the same goal. To that end, the House Republican leadership wrote the President on July 13, 2012 asking the President to work with the Congress to find savings to replace the sequester

You say the President hasn't submitted a plan, but he says he submitted his budget which provides for \$4 trillion in deficit reduction.

Leaving aside that even the Washington Post fact checkers have called into question the \$4 trillion claim, the President has not submitted a specific sequester replacement proposal. Further when the House and Senate both voted on the President's budget, it didn't receive a single vote in support.

The bill doesn't include language turning off the sequester for Medicare, farm programs, or other mandatory spending. Do House Republicans intend to leave the sequester in place for those programs?

The bill specifically provides that if additional savings are identified to replace those cuts, repeal of the 2013 sequester for those programs is permissible.

Why does the bill require OMB to issue a supplemental report on discretionary spending limits on April 15, 2013 and require the President to eliminate any breach of those limits?

Because the current 6-month Continuing Resolution expires on March 27, and there remains a need to enforce the discretionary spending limits set in the Budget Resolution and reaffirmed in this legislation for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2013.