



REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

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THE BUDGET RESOLUTION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010
MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES
(S. Con. Res. 13)

22 April 2009

SUMMARY

- This motion directs the conferees on the budget resolution to prevent use of the fast-track procedure of budget reconciliation to push through legislation fundamentally changing the nature of health care in America, or imposing huge new taxes on energy. The motion has the following goals:
- To prevent the Majority from jamming through Congress a nationalization of health care in America.
- To assure that Americans retain their ability to choose their own doctors and their own health coverage, and not be forced into government-controlled health care.
- To keep the Majority from rushing through a cap-and-trade bill with huge taxes on energy.
- To prevent the Majority from raising taxes beyond the revenue levels in their budget.

BACKGROUND

- Earlier this month, House Republicans offered a complete and comprehensive alternative to the Obama/Democratic budget. The Republican budget would fund the Nation's priorities, support economic growth and job creation, get Federal spending and debt under control, and begin critical reforms to the government's largest, and least sustainable, entitlement programs. The Republican budget did all of this without the job-killing tax hikes required by the budget under discussion today.
The President's budget already calls for \$1.4 trillion in entitlement expansions over the next 10 years, and \$1.5 trillion in tax increases. The House-passed budget also calls for using the fast-track process of budget reconciliation to push through health care "reform" - which could lead to nationalizing medical care in America - and cap-and-trade legislation that could impose huge new costs for gasoline, home heating oil, electricity, and other energy sources.

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- This motion to instruct prevents the use of reconciliation for these aims, and also prevents the Majority from raising taxes beyond the levels in the budget.

WHY BUDGET RECONCILIATION MATTERS

- As background, the House-passed resolution includes reconciliation instructions for three committees, two of which – Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means – share jurisdiction over health care and cap and trade. These reconciliation instructions trigger fast-track procedures limiting debate and amendments on a subsequent reconciliation bill.
- In the House, reconciliation is less important because the House Rules Committee sets the terms of debate on major legislation. It is critical in the Senate, however, because there legislation can be jammed through with little debate or amendment.
 - A reconciliation bill has limited debate, and can be passed by a simple majority of 51 Senators.
 - The Budget Act places strict limits on amendments.
- It should be noted that the Senate does not want reconciliation.
 - The Senate-passed budget resolution excludes reconciliation.
 - Senator Conrad, the Budget Committee Chairman, has warned: “Once you’ve unleashed reconciliation, you can’t get it back in the barn, and it could be used for lots of different things that are completely unintended at this moment. People need to think about that very carefully.”
 - Senator Byrd has said reconciliation was “not designed to create a new climate and energy regime, and certainly not to restructure our entire health care system. Woodrow Wilson once said that the informing function is the most important function of Congress. How do we inform? We publicly debate and amend legislation. We receive feedback, which allows us to change and improve proposals. Matters that affect the lives and livelihoods of our people must not be rushed through the Senate using a procedural fast track that the people never get a chance to comment upon or fully understand.”
 - Twenty-eight Senators wrote Chairman Conrad urging him not to use reconciliation for cap-and-trade legislation because reconciliation’s fast-track procedures “would be inconsistent with the administration’s stated goals of bipartisanship, cooperation, and openness.”
- Supporting this motion simply means giving Congress the time to debate the merits of health care and climate change legislation; giving Members the chance to offer amendments to improve these proposals; and giving the public the time to actually read and understand how this legislation will affect their lives. This is the *least* this Congress must do.