

TIMELINE OF THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

FEBRUARY

- On the first Monday in February, **the President must submit their budget request to the Congressional Budget Office**. Missing the deadline is not uncommon. The request is for the next fiscal year, starting the following October.
- The President's request is the result of an internal Executive-branch process, whereby the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will consult various Federal agencies.

MARCH

- The House Budget Committee and Senate Budget Committee each review the request, and **vote on a Budget Resolution**. This establishes how much discretionary money will be available. The Budget Resolution must **pass in the Budget Committees of each chamber, and then in the full House or Senate**.

APRIL

- The House and Senate will then **conference to produce a Joint Concurrent Resolution, due on April 15th**. This will establish the overall discretionary spending level for the fiscal year, also known as a 302(a) allocation. **Each full chamber must vote again on the Joint Concurrent Resolution**.

APRIL-MAY

- **Both chambers' Appropriations Committees will divide the 302(a) allocations among 12 subcommittees, creating 302(b) allocations**. For example, the House Appropriations Committee will decide how much discretionary spending will go towards the Defense subcommittee. This happens concurrently in both the House and Senate.

LATE SPRING AND ONWARDS

- After 302(a) allocations are established, each **subcommittee holds hearings and votes on a bill determining how much money will be spent on each program within its jurisdiction**. For example, the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee bill will specify how much money goes towards the Navy.
- After each bill has passed the subcommittee, it will then **move to the House or Senate Appropriations Committee for a vote**.
- After passing in Appropriations Committee, the bill must **move to the full House or Senate for a vote**.
- The House and Senate bills will not have the same figures. So, there must be a **conference to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions**, producing a conference bill.
- After the conference, **the full House and Senate must vote again on the conference bill**.
- Following passage in the House and Senate, the conference bill will move to the President to be **signed into law**.

Bills may be packaged together in a "minibus". If all bills are packaged together, it's an "omnibus". This saves time on voting but requires greater consensus.

Ofentimes bills are stalled due to "riders", which refers to embedding new legislation within a bill, such as prohibiting funds from being spent on certain activities.

Timelines are rough estimates. It is not rare for the process to be so delayed that "continuing resolutions" are necessary to avoid a shutdown.