Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

202-408-1080
info@cbpp.org
www.cbpp.org

CBPP STATEMENT

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Contact:
Ellie Blachman, 202-408-1080,
eblachman@cbpp.org

"Regular Order" Means Bipartisan Negotiations and a Deal That Sticks

Statement of Sharon Parrott, CBPP President, in response to House Republicans' release of a proposed short-term continuing resolution to fund the government:

As he released House Republicans' short-term continuing resolution bill, Appropriations Chair Tom Cole spoke to the importance of "restoring regular order." Restoring regular order is indeed crucial. But it's important to be clear about what regular order means.

Regular order means ensuring that a deal is a deal — members of Congress should not be expected to cast their votes for compromise bipartisan legislation only to have it undone through unlawful or partisan actions. Through bipartisan negotiations, policymakers should enact funding legislation that adequately funds important investments in people and communities. The Trump Administration should not be allowed to unilaterally disregard it, such as by stripping funding for cancer research, schools, nutrition for toddlers and preschoolers, help for families struggling to pay rent, and much more, simply because the President does not agree with the agreed upon funding levels. And rescission packages should require the same bipartisan support that was needed to pass the bills in the first place. No illegal pocket rescissions, no partisan rescissions, no impoundments. A deal is only a deal if both sides stick to it.

Regular order on funding bills also means that Democrats and Republicans come to the table for meaningful negotiations on both funding levels for national priorities and expiring provisions — including expiring health provisions — that have significant congressional support and public importance. This year, that means bipartisan negotiations are necessary on the expiring enhanced premium tax credits that make health coverage through the Affordable Care Act marketplaces affordable for more than 20 million people. Both Democrats and Republicans have expressed serious concern about the looming premium spikes that will start to affect consumers when "window shopping" for coverage begins in October, ahead of open enrollment on November 1. Without quick action, people will see unaffordable premiums and many will decide coverage is priced out of financial reach. Getting them to return at a later date will be difficult, if not impossible. Congress still has time to protect people from huge price spikes and becoming uninsured.

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