

THE CONCORD COALITION



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CONCORD COALITION URGES CONGRESS TO PASS A BUDGET RESOLUTION

WASHINGTON — With the official April 15 deadline for a finished budget resolution having passed without even a mark-up in the House or Senate, The Concord Coalition today strongly urged Congress not to abandon its responsibility to pass a budget resolution.

“Our nation faces serious fiscal challenges. Now more than ever, we need a budget resolution that will set fiscally responsible revenue, spending, and deficit reduction targets and include credible budget enforcement mechanisms needed to meet them. The numbers will look bad but there should be no such thing as a deficit too big to face,” said Robert L. Bixby, Executive Director of The Concord Coalition.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is forecasting baseline deficits totaling \$6 trillion over ten years and \$9.8 trillion in the President’s budget. Against this background, Congress may decide in the coming week whether to pursue a budget resolution this year or skip it. In Concord’s view, abandoning the budget process in the face of large deficits as far as the eye can see would represent the height of fiscal irresponsibility.

Election years have become increasingly problematic for the budget. In 1998, 2002, 2004 and 2006 Congress failed to pass a budget. This disturbing trend is hardly a standard to emulate, but even in all but one of those years the House and Senate managed to pass their own versions of a budget resolution. Failure to pass a budget resolution in the House would be unprecedented. The Senate has only failed in 2002.

Without a budget resolution, Congress would have no framework for imposing tough choices on the budget. It would have to resort to backdoor “deeming” resolutions to establish discretionary budget limits, which would signal a lack of commitment to multiple year fiscal restraint. Congress would also lose the opportunity to pass deficit reduction measures through the reconciliation process, which can only be established in a joint budget resolution.

“Families across our nation have faced serious economic challenges this year. They faced these challenges head on by sitting down at the kitchen table, adding up the numbers, and making the tough choices. No family should expect to succeed by throwing the budget out the window and hoping for the best. Congress shouldn’t either,” said Concord Coalition Chief Economist Diane Lim Rogers.

“If Members of Congress of either party are concerned about the large deficits projected in the President’s budget, the solution is not to run from the budget process or criticize from the sidelines. The solution is to make the tough choices and propose an alternative. This is what it means to govern, and this is what we should expect from our elected officials,” Bixby said.

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The Concord Coalition is a national, grassroots organization. Former U.S. Senators Warren B. Rudman (R-NH) and Bob Kerrey (D-NE) serve as its co-chairs and former U.S. Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson serves as president. For more information, visit www.concordcoalition.org.