Budget and Appropriations 101

Why the Federal Budget Matters and How to Engage
Why do we care?
Total Federal Budget

- Natural Resources and Environment: 1%
- Non-Defense Discretionary: 6%
- Defense Discretionary: 14%
- Mandatory Programs: 63%
- Net Interest: 16%
## Mandatory vs. Discretionary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANDATORY</th>
<th>DISCRETIONARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>Environmental protection education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid</td>
<td>Job training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>Border security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP</td>
<td>Scientific research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Retirement Benefits</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Benefits</td>
<td>Economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Insurance</td>
<td>Some low-income assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Law enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The Congressional Budget Process

### Calendar Year in which Fiscal Year Begins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By first Monday in February</td>
<td>President submits budget to Congress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February-September</td>
<td>Congressional phase. Agencies interact with Congress, justifying and explaining President's budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Late March</td>
<td><strong>Debt Ceiling Breached</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Congress completes consideration of the budget resolution, sets 302A level. Appropriations process begins, committee decides on 302B allocations to subcommittees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td><strong>Continuing Resolution Expires</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>Fiscal year ends. Congress must pass all appropriations bills by this date or else must pass a continuing resolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Fiscal year begins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BUDGET PROCESS ENDS

• Congress Completes Consideration of Budget Resolution
• Sets Topline Discretionary Spending level: 302A

APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS BEGINS

• Approps Committee decided 302B levels
• Interior Allocation usually around $30 Billion
Discretionary Federal Budget

President's Proposed Discretionary Spending (Fiscal Year 2015)

- Military: 55%
- Food & Agriculture: 1%
- Transportation: 2%
- Science: 3%
- International Affairs: 3%
- Energy & Environment: 3%
- Social Security, Unemployment & Labor: 5%
- Medicare & Health: 5%
- Housing & Community: 5%
- Government: 6%
- Veterans' Benefits: 6%
- Education: 6%
Reconciliation

A powerful, expedited legislative tool
  • Cannot be filibustered
  • Only requires simple majority
  • President can still veto

Can be used to make significant policy changes
  • Affordable Care Act

What’s different this year?
  • Two different reconciliation processes
Conservation Funding

The graph shows the percentage of the federal budget allocated for conservation funding from 1975 to 2020. The funding percentage has decreased significantly over time, with a slight fluctuation in the late 1980s and early 1990s. By 2020, the percentage is at its lowest point in the graph's timeline.
How to Engage

Agency
• Budget Requests
• Performance Measures
• Budget Justifications

Administration
• Office of Management and Budget

Congress
• Appropriations Testimony
• Public Witness Day
• Member Witness Day
• Dear Colleagues
• Appropriations Requests
• Member Advocacy
Senate Appropriations Committee

Full Committee

Chairman
- Sen. Cochran (R-MS)

Ranking Member
- Sen. Leahy (D-VT)

Interior and Environment Subcommittee

Chairwoman
- Sen. Murkowski (R-AK)

Ranking Member
- Sen. Udall (D-NM)
House Appropriations Committee

Full Committee

Chairman
- Rep. Frelinghuysen (R-NJ)

Ranking Member
- Rep. Lowey (D-NY)

Interior and Environment Subcommittee

Chairman
- Rep. Calvert (R-CA)

Ranking Member
- Rep. McCollum (D-MN)
Riders

Appropriations Bills are Always a prime target for Riders

• Why?
• What are Riders?
• What can we do about them?
End Game

- Congress Passes all 12 Appropriations Bills
- Omnibus
- Continuing Resolution
- Government Shutdown