

Ryan Motion to Instruct Budget Conferees

Talking Points

- Earlier this month, Republicans offered the American people a budget that would not only fund our priorities, but also support economic growth and job creation, get Federal spending and debt under control, and begin critical reforms to our largest – and least sustainable entitlement programs. And the Republican budget did all of this without the job-killing tax hikes required by the budget we’re discussing today.
- The budget we’re discussing today – the Obama/Democratic budget – exploits the current financial crisis to rush through a sweeping expansion of the Federal Government.
- This motion to instruct aims at ensuring this budget resolution doesn’t trigger a fast-track process, known as budget reconciliation, to jam through a government take-over of health care and education, or a cap-and-trade tax that will hurt families, kill jobs, and put America at a severe competitive disadvantage with China and other countries.
- 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. 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 has a Rules Committee. It is critical in the Senate, however, because there legislation can be jammed through with little debate or amendment.
- The Senate does not want reconciliation. The Senate-passed budget resolution did not include reconciliation instructions. In fact, it included a number of protections against using reconciliation.
- This motion instructs the House conferees to recede to the Senate on four items:

- To drop reconciliation instructions from the resolution.
 - To adopt a Senate provision to block legislation that eliminates Americans' ability to keep their health plans or choose their own doctor.
 - To adopt a Senate provision that keeps reconciliation from being used for cap and trade legislation.
 - To adopt a Senate provision that would prevent taxes from being raised to even higher levels than assumed in the resolution.
- To reiterate, the Senate does not want reconciliation. Reconciliation is supposed to be for deficit reduction, not for driving through major changes in the budget or the economy.
 - This is what Senate Budget Committee Chairman Conrad said yesterday about reconciliation:

“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.”
 - Chairman Conrad is not alone. 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.”
 - Senator Byrd recently wrote that reconciliation was:

“[N]ot 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.”

- But even more important, Americans are concerned about all the spending that’s going on here in Washington – and we should not underestimate how well the American people understand.
- Like almost everyone else here, I just spent two weeks in my district, listening to my constituents. My district falls right in the middle of the political spectrum, so it’s a good microcosm of attitudes across the country. What I heard time after time is:
 - They are worried about all the spending going on here – a trillion here and a trillion there.
 - They are worried about the government taking over their health care.
 - They are worried about Congress rushing through a huge expansion of government.
 - In fact, after one of my town meetings, an 84-year-old lady approached me and said: “Is Congress going to use reconciliation to push through health care reform.” I was floored by that: I didn’t think anyone outside the beltway know what budget reconciliation was.
- We are experiencing a severe economic challenge – one that consists of an unprecedented combination of elements, and is occurring on a global scale. Here in America unemployment is rising. People are worried about keeping their jobs, and making ends meet.
- There are things this Congress can, and should, be doing to help. But there is no need to jam through a plan to nationalize our health care system or to impose hundreds of billions in additional energy taxes on already-struggling businesses, workers, and families. That is simply

exploiting this crisis – and not addressing it.

- 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 American people the time to actually read and understand how this legislation will affect their lives. Considering the historic expansion of government this budget would set in motion, I think this is the *least* this Congress must do.