



Legislative Bulletin.....January 6, 2011

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H. Res. _—A resolution to cut Congress’s budget

H. Res. _—Reducing the amount authorized for salaries and expenses of Member, committee, and leadership offices in 2011 and 2012 (Rep. Walden, R-OR)

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to be considered on Thursday, January 6, 2011, under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the resolution. [H.Res.5](#), which established the rules of the House for the 112th Congress, allows the resolution to be debated for two hours, equally divided between a designee of the majority and a designee of the minority.

Summary: The resolution reduces the office budget for each Member, each committee, and leadership offices by 5%. The bill also reduces the budget of the Appropriations Committee by 9%.

Specifically, the resolution prohibits the Member Representational Allowance (MRA) of each office from exceeding 95% of FY 2010 levels for the 112th Congress (FY 2011 and FY 2012). Additionally, the resolution prohibits the head of any House leadership office from disbursing appropriations for salaries and expenses greater than 95% of the rate provided in FY 2010 for the 112th Congress. The resolution also limits in the 112th Congress, the aggregate amount authorized, for expenses of committees of the House of Representatives to 95% of the aggregate amount provided for expenses for FY 2009 and FY 2010. Finally, the resolution prohibits the chair of Appropriations Committee from disbursing appropriations for salaries and expenses during the 112th Congress greater than 91% of the rate provided for FY 2010.

Additional Background: Some conservatives believe it is important for Congress to cut costs and streamline the operations of the House. According to House Republican leadership, announcements of additional savings from administrative, support and related institutional functions are expected throughout the coming year.

Members of the House of Representatives have one allowance, the Members’ Representational Allowance (MRA), with which to operate their offices. The MRA was made subject to regulations of the Committee on House Administration in 1996. Expenses related to official and representational duties are reimbursable under the MRA in accordance with the regulations contained in this *Members’ Congressional Handbook*. The MRA for each office is based on a formula that typically covers personnel compensation; personnel benefits; travel; rent, utilities,

and communications; printing and reproduction; other services; supplies and materials; transportation of things; equipment; and franked mail. Information on individual office spending is published in the quarterly *Statements of Disbursement of the House*.

House Leadership Offices and Respective Budgets for FY 2010: For salaries and expenses, as authorized by law, \$25,881,000, including: Office of the Speaker, \$5,077,000, including \$25,000 for official expenses of the Speaker; Office of the Majority Floor Leader, \$2,530,000, including \$10,000 for official expenses of the Majority Leader; Office of the Minority Floor Leader, \$4,565,000, including \$10,000 for official expenses of the Minority Leader; Office of the Majority Whip, including the Chief Deputy Majority Whip, \$2,194,000, including \$5,000 for official expenses of the Majority Whip; Office of the Minority Whip, including the Chief Deputy Minority Whip, \$1,690,000, including \$5,000 for official expenses of the Minority Whip; Speaker's Office for Legislative Floor Activities, \$517,000; Republican Steering Committee, \$981,000; Republican Conference, \$1,748,000; Republican Policy Committee, \$362,000; Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, \$1,366,000; Democratic Caucus, \$1,725,000; nine minority employees, \$1,552,000; training and program development--majority, \$290,000; training and program development--minority, \$290,000; Cloakroom Personnel--majority, \$497,000; and Cloakroom Personnel--minority, \$497,000.

Committee Action: On January 5, 2011, the House adopted H.Res.5, providing for the rules of the House for the 112th Congress. This allows for the consideration of the legislation.

Administration Position: No Statement of Administration Policy is provided.

Cost to Taxpayers: A CBO cost estimate for the resolution is not provided. However, multiple sources state the resolution will reduce spending by approximately \$35.2 million over the rest of the fiscal year. According to the House GOP Majority Transition Office chaired by Rep. Walden, the resolution will reduce spending in leadership offices by \$1 million, committees by \$8.1 million, and aggregate MRA spending by \$26.1 million.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No, but the bill does reduce federal spending by \$35.2 million for FY 2011.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates? No.

Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits? Though the bill contains no earmarks, and there is no accompanying committee report, the earmarks rule (House Rule XXI, Clause 9(a)) does not apply, by definition, to legislation considered under suspension of the rules.

Constitutional Authority: An explanation of Constitutional Authority is not necessary, as the resolution affects the rules of the House. However, Article I, Section 5, states: "*Each House may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its members for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two thirds, expel a member.*" [emphasis added]

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