



## PRESIDENT OBAMA'S MISSED BUDGET DEADLINES

*AN UNPRECEDENTED DISRESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW*

January 26, 2012

The Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 requires the President to submit his budget request for the upcoming fiscal year no later than the first Monday of February. Earlier this week, the Obama administration announced that for the third time in four years it will not adhere to this legal deadline. The Office of Management and Budget cites "the need to finalize decisions and technical details of the document."<sup>1</sup> This failure to meet statutory budget obligations has become a pernicious pattern for the President and his party's leaders. For over 1,000 days, Senate Democrats have failed to pass a budget resolution, ignoring the legal requirement to pass a budget resolution by April 15 of each year.

As House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan recently noted, "The decision to delay the release of his budget again could not come at a more precarious moment for our fiscal and economic future. Rather than tackle these challenges head-on, this President continues to punt, while his party's leaders in the Senate have simply abandoned responsible budgeting altogether."<sup>2</sup>

Despite trillion-dollar deficits and a growing urgency for Washington to put its fiscal house in order, President Obama continues to demonstrate an unprecedented disrespect for his legal obligations. A review of the historical record reveals that no administration has so flagrantly ignored its budgetary roles and responsibilities. The House Budget Committee has compiled a chronological review of Presidential budget submissions dating back to 1923. Several key points from the data:

- In just one term, President Obama has missed the budget deadline more than any other President.
- In the 90 years covering FY1923 through FY 2013, President Obama is the only President to miss the deadline two years in a row. He is the only President who has missed the deadline in three of the four years of a term. And, he holds the record for the longest delay (at 98 days).
- All Presidents from Harding through Reagan's first term met the statutory budget submission deadline in every year. In five of these years, a change in the law was requested and passed to extend the deadline, and the President always met it.
- Since the budget process moved the date of submission to the first Monday in February, the incoming President's first budget submission has been delayed for practical reasons (the President's

<sup>1</sup> Jackson, David. "Obama delays budget release by a week." *USA Today*, January 23, 2012.

<http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2012/01/Obama-delays-budget-release-by-a-week-610234/1>

<sup>2</sup> Paul Ryan: Disappointment with President's Abdication of Leadership on Budget. January 23, 2012.

<http://budget.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=275789>

inauguration is less than three weeks before the budget submission's deadline). Yet President Obama's first budget in his first year set a new record with a 98-day delay for his FY2010 budget.

- Since the statutory deadline was extended to the first Monday in February, with the exception of the first budget for a new President, this deadline has only been missed three times: Clinton FY1998; Obama FY2012; and Obama FY 2013.

The President's flagrant disrespect for budget deadlines extends beyond the late submissions of his annual budget request. The President is required to submit a Midsession Review no later than July 16 each year. The President is required to submit a Financial Report of the U.S. Government no later than December 15. The President is required to submit a plan to shore up Medicare's finances within 15 days of a funding warning by the Medicare Trustees.

Not once has President Obama adhered to any of these deadlines:

- The President's Midsession Review has never been released by July 16;
- The President's Financial Report of the U.S. Government has never been released by December 15;
- The President has not once responded to the Medicare Trigger.

The President's failures to meet his legal obligations are symptomatic of a failure to meet his more critical moral obligation to the American people by tackling our most pressing fiscal and economic challenges.

*This document was prepared by the Republican staff of the Committee on the Budget, U.S. House of Representatives.  
It has not been approved by the full committee and may not reflect the views of individual committee members.*