



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

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Chris Van Hollen,  
*Ranking Democrat*

February 8, 2012

## VOTE YES

### ON EXPEDITED RESCISSIONS/LEGISLATIVE LINE-ITEM VETO (H.R. 3521)

- **Has strong bipartisan support in the House.** This bill was introduced last year by former Budget Committee Chairman John Spratt, and was introduced this year by Representative Paul Ryan and me with strong bipartisan support.
- **Has strong bipartisan support in the Senate.** A similar Senate bill (S. 102) introduced by Senators McCain and Carper also has strong bipartisan support.
- **Administration strongly supports the bill.**

#### **Provides more accountability and transparency.**

- This bipartisan legislation provides another tool to ensure that we are good stewards of taxpayer dollars. The bill creates a process that enables the President to constitutionally propose – and the Congress to vote in an expedited manner on – the elimination of unnecessary individual discretionary spending items from legislation that arrives on his desk.

#### **Retains Congressional authority to make funding decisions.**

- Retains the absolute prerogative of Congress to vote up or down on Presidentially proposed rescissions of funding. The President cannot unilaterally veto funding; the bill merely provides that if the President proposes a rescission, that proposal receives expedited consideration for an up or down, majority vote in Congress.

#### **Gives Congress a chance to vote on specified funding provided within an omnibus bill.**

- Last year, the Majority brought to the floor a year-end funding bill that bundled together nine appropriations bills. Four of them that had never been individually considered by the full House; two of them were never even voted on in the Appropriations Committee. Only one of those nine appropriations bills was separately considered by the Senate. Members and the President clearly had not had an opportunity to scrutinize this legislation. This bill offers the Congress a chance to vote on specified funding provisions in an appropriations measure that the President has singled out for rescission.

#### **Helps ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.**

- Budget process reform cannot be a substitute for judgment, and it cannot replace the urgent need to put Americans back to work and to put our nation on a path toward long-term fiscal sustainability. But this is a bipartisan step toward ensuring that American taxpayers' dollars are spent wisely and responsibly.

**Summary of H.R. 3521 (time periods would change under the Ryan/Van Hollen amendment):**

**Line-Item Veto Authority.** Within 45 days (10 days under the Ryan/Van Hollen amendment) of the enactment of an appropriations bill, the President may transmit a special message to Congress proposing to cancel any amount of discretionary budget authority. He can transmit up to two special messages per appropriations bill and two for any other appropriations measure (omnibus, continuing resolution, or supplemental bills).

**Procedures for Expedited Consideration.** Legislation implementing the proposed cancellations would receive expedited floor consideration and an automatic up-or-down vote without amendment.

**Presidential Authority to Withhold Funds.** This bill clarifies current law allowing the President to withhold funds from obligation, pending consideration of rescission proposals by limiting the withholding of the amount proposed for rescission to no more than 45 days (60 days under the Ryan/Van Hollen amendment). This provides adequate time for the President to propose and the Congress to enact a measure to approve rescissions while avoiding an extended period of uncertainty regarding the availability of the funds in question.

**Savings Go to Deficit Reduction.** This bill devotes all savings from the Expedited Line-Item Veto and Rescissions Act to deficit reduction and requires the statutory discretionary spending caps to be adjusted downwards to reflect the savings. Additionally the committee allocations are adjusted downwards by the Budget Committees to reflect these savings.

**Nature of the Approval Bill.** The Presidential special message to Congress must meet certain requirements, including the dollar amount to be rescinded; the account, bureau, and agency from which the rescission shall occur; and the amount of funding that would remain. The message must also include the text of the approval bill for consideration by the Congress. The President may choose to send two separate messages for a single bill, but may not include the same rescission proposals in both bills.