



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

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Chris Van Hollen,
Ranking Democrat

September 10, 2015

PREVENT A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN ACT OF 2015

**introduced by Rep. Chris Van Hollen,
along with Reps. Nita Lowey, Rosa DeLauro, and Barbara Lee**

Summary

Two years ago, Republicans forced a shameful government shutdown that cost the economy billions of dollars and created huge disruptions and uncertainty around the country. Today, because of the GOP's refusal to sit down at the negotiation table and work out an agreement to end the harmful sequester and fund critical government programs, we face the threat of another shutdown.

The Prevent A Government Shutdown Act of 2015 calls for bipartisan, bicameral negotiations to raise the Budget Control Act's discretionary spending caps and establish appropriate offsets. If the negotiations do not succeed by October 1, the caps are automatically raised to the level in the President's 2016 budget, eliminating the sequester for non-defense discretionary programs and providing the same amount of sequester relief for defense programs. Under either outcome, appropriations action will be able to proceed, avoiding a government shutdown.

Section by section description

Section 1 - Findings that cite: the history of the Budget Control Act's sequester process and subsequent changes; the damaging effect of sequester level funding on defense and non-defense programs and of a government shutdown; the need to raise the discretionary caps to prevent a shutdown and provide essential government services; and the preference to offset the cost of sequester relief by closing tax loopholes.

Section 2 - Require a bipartisan, bicameral leadership group to increase the defense and non-defense discretionary caps equally for both fiscal years 2016 and 2017, and to find offsets in the amount the group deems appropriate. A majority of the group must approve an agreement by September 25, 2015, and the resulting legislation must be approved by October 1, 2015.

Section 3 - If there is no agreement to raise the caps by October 1, then the caps are automatically raised to the level requested by the President's 2016 budget, eliminating the non-defense discretionary sequester and providing equal sequester relief for defense spending.