



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

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Chris Van Hollen,  
Ranking Democrat

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## **Prevent A December Government Shutdown Act, H.R. 3708**

**Introduced by Rep. Chris Van Hollen with all House Budget Committee Democrats and Reps. Lowey and DeLauro**

### **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 end the harmful sequester and fund critical government programs at necessary levels, we face the threat of another shutdown when the temporary funding bill expires in December.

The Prevent A December Government Shutdown Act (H.R. 3708) calls for bipartisan, bicameral negotiations to raise the Budget Control Act's discretionary spending caps and establish appropriate offsets. If the negotiations do not lead to a deal enacted by November 16, the caps for 2016 are automatically raised to the level in the President's 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 in December.

### **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 fiscal year 2016, and to find offsets in the amount the group deems appropriate. A majority of the group must approve an agreement by October 30, 2015, and the resulting legislation must be approved by November 16, 2015.

Section 3 - If there is no agreement in place to raise the caps, then the 2016 caps are automatically raised on November 17 to the level in the President's budget, eliminating the non-defense discretionary sequester and providing equal sequester relief for defense spending.