

Amendment to the Chairman's Mark

Offered by Representatives Van Hollen, McDermott, Lee, Pocan, Lujan Grisham,
and Blumenauer

Truth in Budgeting – Preventing the Abuse of the “Overseas Contingency Operations” Designation to Skirt Funding Caps

1. At the end of Title V, Sec. 509. add the following:

“(c) Limitation.—Allocations made for fiscal year 2015 for overseas contingency operations/global war on terrorism pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section shall not exceed the level the President requests for overseas contingency operations/global war on terrorism for fiscal year 2015 and justifies in a detailed, account-level, submission to Congress.”

2. Amend the committee report to reflect the following policy assumptions:

The resolution creates a point of order against legislation that provides overseas contingency operations (OCO) funding in excess of the amounts the military says it needs for such operations. The Budget Control Act of 2011 allows discretionary caps to be automatically increased for OCO funding, which has created a large loophole that has been used to circumvent discretionary funding caps. Both the Pentagon and Congress have abused this loophole by designating non-war related funding as “OCO.” The Pentagon has funded through the OCO designation billions of dollars of costs associated with active-duty end strength, flying hour requirements, and weapon system upgrades that normally would be funded within the “base” budget. This past year, Congress passed an appropriations bill that provided \$7 billion more than the Administration, and the military leadership, said they needed for OCO. The resolution, through this point of order, hopes to instill greater discipline and transparency in the budgeting process. If discretionary caps are too low and additional funding is needed to address the country's priorities, Congress should raise the caps by amending the law, rather than through using backdoor loopholes that undermine the integrity of the budget process.