



## Continuing Resolution is a Sign of a Broken Budget Process September 16, 2014

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Congress has failed to pass any of the required appropriations bills, and as a result, the House will soon vote on a short-term continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government funded, with Senate action expected shortly thereafter.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, made the following statement:

“It’s unfortunate lawmakers could not do their job and pass appropriations bills into law. This continuing resolution is another sign of a breakdown in the budget process. Passing the 12 appropriations bills each year is a basic legal responsibility for Congress. It forces both chambers to have an open debate about spending priorities – and allocate funding accordingly. Without appropriations bills, policymakers aren’t distinguishing between high and low-value spending. That said, this bill is obviously far preferable to allowing the government to shut down, and Congress should pass a CR that complies with the spending caps in current law.

“Unfortunately, even for a CR, the legislation being considered is not as responsible as it could be. While it does keep aggregate spending below the caps, it does so partly by relying on budget gimmicks that pay for real spending with illusory savings. It also maintains spending levels for Overseas Contingency Operations at last year’s levels, nearly 40 percent higher than the administration’s request and failing to reflect the troop drawdown in Afghanistan. While some of the funding will be necessary for new operations related to ISIS that were not reflected in the administration’s request, we are concerned that much of this additional funding will be used to backfill the base defense budget and effectively circumvent the caps on defense spending. Because spending for OCO is effectively exempt from budget discipline, it is particularly important that spending through OCO be scrutinized and limited to the intended purposes.

“The CR lets Congress sidestep tough choices. Budgeting is a basic and fundamental part of governing. Congress should not forgo this responsibility.”

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