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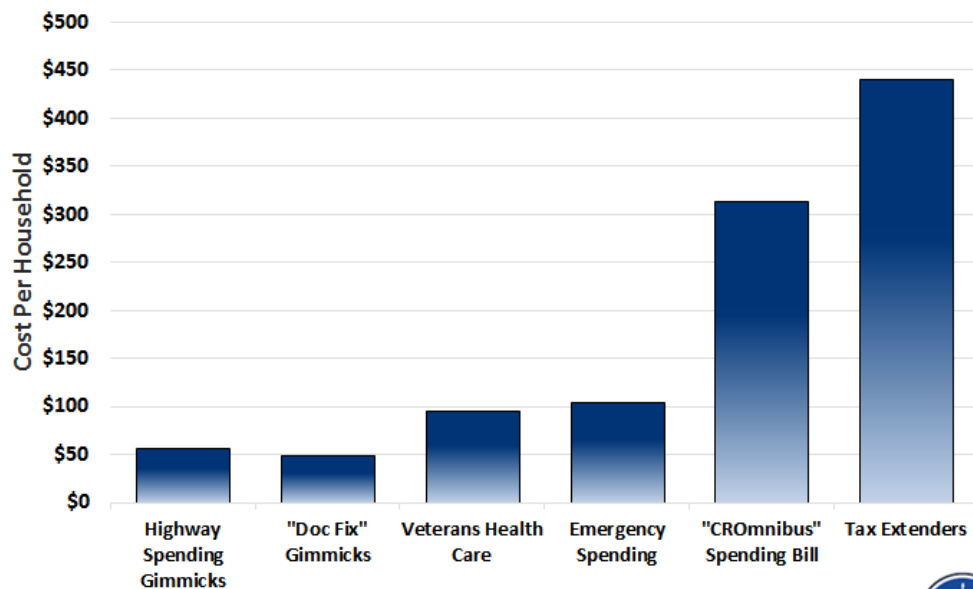
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Congress Leaves Growing Debt for Every Household December 23, 2014

This year, Congress added \$100 billion to the debt beyond what was expected by passing laws financed with deficits or gimmicks. Knowing that billions and trillions can make one's eyes glaze over, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget has translated the costs into each household's share of the added debt.

Gimmicks and Debt Added This Year



Source: Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation.
Costs include interest.



Maya MacGuineas, president of CRFB, said the following:

"Congress sneaked in billions and billions in additional borrowing this year. The risk is that with Congress' reckless track record, and such huge numbers, families get used to all the irresponsible borrowing and forget that it affects them."



Here is a roundup of congressional actions, along with each household's share of new debt from each one:

- Highways: Lawmakers relied partly on gimmicks to pay for this year's highway funding. **\$60 per household.**
- Veterans' health care: In response to allegations of substandard care in the veterans' health care system, Congress enacted an unpaid-for funding increase this summer. **\$100 per household.**
- "Doc fix:" Congress used a gimmick to pay for a small part of the patch to maintain Medicare physician payments. **\$50 per household.**
- Islamic State and Ebola: To fight the Islamic State group and to combat Ebola, Congress used the emergency designation for funding to avoid paying for the policies. **\$105 per household.**
- CROmnibus: When Congress finally passed funding for the fiscal year (2 1/2 months after it started), the final bill used phony offsets, unjustified cap exemptions, and included some hidden spending. **\$315 per household.**
- Tax extenders: Lawmakers reinstated more than 50 expired tax breaks without paying for a cent of it. **\$440 per household.**

They tried to add even more to the debt:

- Unpaid for extension of unemployment benefits. **\$180 per household.**
- Permanent doc fix. **\$1,700 per household.**
- Permanent extension of many tax extenders. **\$7,850 per household.**
- Veterans Affairs reform bill. **\$4,750 per household.**
- Repeal of some of the offsets in the Affordable Care Act. **\$1,000 per household.**

"This makes no sense; the debt as a share of the economy is at historic highs and yet lawmakers spent the year making things worse instead of trying to make them better. This is not an economic recipe for success, and American families will ultimately bear the cost."

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