

## Annual Appropriations Cycle

All text lifted from [The Congressional Appropriations Process: An Introduction \(2016\)](#)

February

### 1. President's Budget

The President initiates the annual budget cycle with the submission of an annual budget proposal for the upcoming fiscal year to Congress. The President is required to submit the annual budget on or before the first Monday in February. Congress has, however, provided deadline extensions both statutorily and, sometimes, informally.

The President recommends spending levels for various programs and agencies of the federal government in the form of budget authority (or BA). Such authority does not represent cash provided to or reserved for agencies. Instead, the term refers to authority provided by federal law to enter into contracts or other financial obligations that will result in immediate or future expenditures (or outlays) involving federal government funds. Most appropriations are a form of budget authority that also provides the legal authority to make the subsequent payments from the Treasury.

April

### 2. Congress Adopts Budget Resolution

### 3. House and Senate Appropriations Committees

After the President submits the budget, the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees hold hearings on the segments of the budget under their jurisdiction.

After conducting these hearings, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees make their suballocations, and the subcommittees begin to draft, mark up, and report the regular bills under their jurisdiction to their respective full committees. Both Appropriations Committees consider each subcommittee's recommendations separately.

May/June

- a. **House Appropriations** – The House Appropriations Committee reports the 12 regular appropriations bills—including the [Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies](#) bill—separately to the full House. The committee generally reports the bills in May and June. Generally, the full House starts floor consideration of the regular appropriations bills in May or June as well.

June/July

- b. **Senate Appropriations** – The Senate Appropriations Committee typically begins reporting the bills—including the [Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies](#) bill—in June and generally completes committee consideration prior to the August recess. The Senate typically begins floor consideration of the bills beginning in June or July.

September

### 4. House and Senate Conference

The Constitution requires that the House and Senate approve the same measure in precisely the same form before it may be presented to the President for his/her signature or veto.

Consequently, once the House and Senate have both completed initial consideration of an appropriations measure, the Appropriations Committees in each chamber will endeavor to negotiate a resolution of the differences between their respective versions. The practice has generally been for the House and Senate to convene a conference committee to resolve differences between the chambers on appropriations bills. Alternatively, agreement may be reached through an exchange of amendments between the houses. In current practice, the Senate typically passes the House bill with the Senate version attached as a single substitute amendment.

October 1

**5. Presidential Action**

Under the Constitution, after a measure is presented to the President, he/she has 10 days to sign or veto the measure. If he/she takes no action, the bill automatically becomes law at the end of the 10- day period if Congress is in session. Conversely, if he/she takes no action when Congress has adjourned, he/she may pocket veto the bill. If the President vetoes the bill, he/she sends it back to Congress. Congress may override the veto by a two-thirds vote in both houses. If Congress successfully overrides the veto, the bill becomes law. If Congress is unsuccessful, the bill dies