

Will President-Elect Trump Face an Immediate Budget Battle With Congress?

President-elect Donald Trump requested Congress pass a short-term spending bill to fund the government through March, according to reports.

House Republican members are looking to pass a spending bill, or continuing resolution, that would fund the government through March 31.

A continuing resolution funds government programs short term through appropriations legislation.

"I would say the simple solution for a lot of us here is just look at the [continuing resolution]," Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, told reporters Wednesday at a monthly forum with lawmakers and journalists on Capitol Hill. "Set the [continuing resolution] at the 1040 spending level [\$ trillion] ... so there's an opportunity for the new Congress to be seated and the new president to be sworn in and pick it up from there. We know what that path looks like. It's clean, it's simple and it should be doable."

Senate Republicans have raised concerns over waiting to allocate federal funds for 2017.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has told reporters he would support a spending bill that would fund the government through September. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., favors passing a long-term term spending bill now, CQ Budget Tracker's David Lerman wrote in a Thursday-morning email briefing.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., says those who support a short-term

spending bill are “idiots” and “will do great damage to the military and our ability to defend the nation.”

“Whatever the House can pass, we’ll pass over here,” Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn, R-Texas, said.

In a closed-door meeting Thursday, House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., was reported to have been in favor of a short-term spending bill.

“A long-term spending bill is a needless concession to Democrat priorities,” Rachel Bovard, director of policy services at The Heritage Foundation, told The Daily Signal. “It makes absolutely no sense for Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell to waste time cutting a long-term spending deal with a departing president when Republicans will have unified control of the government in January.”

The now lame-duck Congress must pass a spending bill to keep the government, which is funded until Dec. 9, from shutting down.

“I don’t think anybody expects that [Trump] balance the budget the day he gets here,” Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, told reporters on Wednesday. “So he’s got to have some runway for that.”

The Hill reported on Thursday, “House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers, R-Ky., told reporters that Trump was driving factor behind the short-term spending bill—which his committee had largely opposed.”

“I would have certainly liked to have finished up our bills,” Rogers told CQ Budget Tracker. “And we were making good progress. But time is running out. And secondly, we thought it important that the new president have input on the spending plans.”

An omnibus spending bill funding the government for longer than a short-term package would be a “mistake,” Heritage’s

Bovard wrote in a recent op-ed.

“Furthermore, any long-term bill will limit President-elect Trump’s ability to implement his agenda upon taking office,” Bovard said. “If Republicans are at all strategic, they will pass a short-term bill into early next year, therefore giving themselves and the new president the maximum ability to implement GOP priorities.”

Vice President-elect Mike Pence met with House Republicans Thursday morning on Capitol Hill.

“We’re going to be working with the administration to make America strong, more prosperous and to do the things that frankly President [Barack] Obama hasn’t been able to do in the last eight years, and we’re pretty excited,” Rep. Raúl Labrador, R-Idaho, told reporters Wednesday.

Ryan and Pence met Thursday, both desiring to work “hand-in-glove over the next two months.” {eoa}