

Nov. 22, 2023

How far apart Congress is on 'laddered' spending stopgap

House Speaker Mike Johnson's "laddered" continuing resolution is now law. The unique structure splits the 12 annual appropriations areas into two groups. The first will expire on Jan. 19 and provides funding for agencies covered by four of the bills. The remaining government funding expires Feb. 2.

This plan could make it more difficult to create the broad compromises that have marked previous omnibuses and continuing resolutions. Individual policy issues could create roadblocks to agreements, including numerous proposals related to abortion, schools, law enforcement and LGBTQ+ rights. And House Republicans, particularly those aligned with the Freedom Caucus, have already noted their dissatisfaction at topline spending numbers, which they say are too high. Senate Democrats and President Joe Biden are unlikely to agree to cuts that would satisfy those representatives.

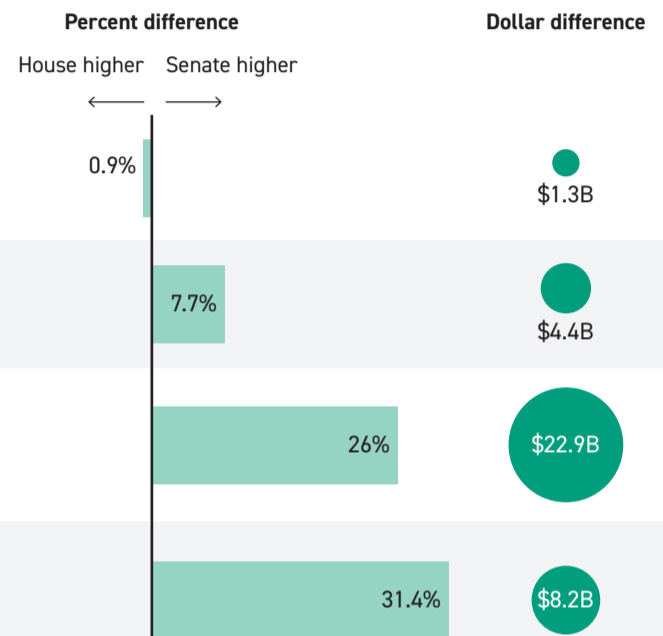
Tracking differences and hangups in House and Senate funding bills

Respective bills advanced out of: ● Full House ● Full Senate
● House committee ● Senate committee

Deadline: Jan. 19

\$36.7 billion gap between four House and Senate bills

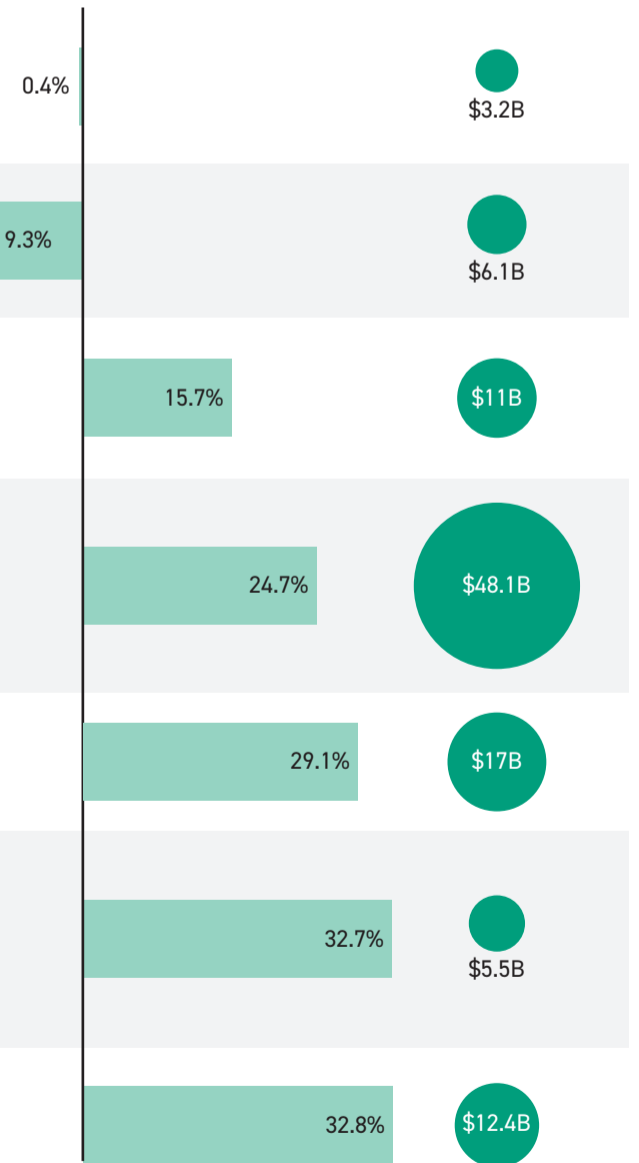
- ● **Military Construction-Veterans Affairs**
 The House and Senate have each passed their respective versions of the funding measure and have topline differences of less than 1 percent.
- ● **Energy-Water**
 Senate Democrats have raised concern over rescissions to rebate and incentive programs that are included as riders in the House bill.
- ● **Transportation-HUD**
 The House measure would cut Amtrak-related funding, which Democrats and some House Republicans object to.
- ● **Agriculture**
 Senate Democrats are likely to oppose several measures in the House bill, including prohibiting sending abortion pills via mail and preventing the FDA from enacting several regulations on tobacco products.



Deadline: Feb. 2

\$103.2 billion gap between seven House and Senate bills

- ● **Defense**
 The NDAA, not the defense appropriations bill, is where most defense policy debates take place. However, measures related to abortion and diversity and equity programs could be roadblocks in the appropriations bill.
- ● **Homeland Security**
 The White House in September said Biden would veto the House Homeland Security measure over cuts to funding for immigration programs and because it allocates more than \$2 billion for border wall construction.
- ● **Commerce-Justice-Science**
 Freedom Caucus members in the House blocked a floor vote on the House measure, partly over objections to the laddered CR proposal and because they think funding levels in the bill are too high. Other Republicans also objected to Justice Department and FBI funding levels.
- ● **Labor-HHS-Education**
 House Republicans voted against bringing the measure to a floor vote, in part over concerns to the size of cuts in the measure. The difference between the House and Senate measures is the largest by dollar value of any of the bills. Conservative House Republicans also included the Hyde Amendment to restrict federally funded abortions, cut HIV funding and added additional abortion-related proposals to the bill.
- ● **State-Foreign Operations**
 The House measure would make significant reductions to State Department funding and faced opposition from some House Republicans because it makes funds available for Ukraine aid.
- ● **Financial Services**
 Measures included in the House bill would prohibit federal employee health care from covering abortions and gender-affirming care. Other measures would institute similar policies for Washington, D.C., including prohibiting the use of federal funds for abortion and needle exchange programs and repealing or otherwise limiting District laws regarding assisted suicide and nondiscrimination programs.
- ● **Interior-Environment**
 Senate Democrats have raised concern over House riders that make cuts to the Waters of the U.S. rule and affect EPA air quality standards and power plant and tailpipe rules.



Note: The Legislative Branch funding bill is not shown. The House totals are the base amounts approved and do not include disaster relief (Financial Services, Homeland Security), wildfire suppression (Interior-Environment) and program integrity funding (Labor-HHS-Education).

Sources: House Committee on Appropriations, Senate Committee on Appropriations, POLITICO and E&E News reporting

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