

SPENDING REDUCTION ACCOUNT AMENDMENT

DESCRIPTION

The amendment modifies the Spending Reduction Account in H. Res. 5 (subsection (j) of section (3)) to add a Budget Act enforcement mechanism to ensure the savings are achieved and to put the full House in control of the account.

The amendment makes the following changes.

Spending Reduction Accounts. It modifies paragraphs (4) and (5), which create spending reduction accounts under the control of the Appropriations Committee. The revision provides that the amount in that account would be based on estimated savings provided by the Budget Committee. Under the Budget Act and House rules, the Budget Committee is responsible for providing estimates of legislation. This change retains that role. It also adds language to make clear that funds from the spending reduction account cannot be spent. Under H.Res.5 it is unclear whether there is authority to spend funds from these accounts.

Enforcement. It provides for a reduction in the spending limit for the Appropriations Committee, known as a section 302(a) allocation. Under section 302(a) of the Budget Act, after completion of a budget resolution, the Appropriations Committee is given a total amount to spend. Under section 302(b) of the Budget Act, the Appropriations Committee sub-divides this allocation among its 12 appropriations subcommittees. Using Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates, the Budget Committees monitor spending by the Appropriations Committee to ensure spending allocations are not exceeded. These allocations are enforced by Budget Act points of order.

Control of the Accounts. Instead of giving control of the spending reduction accounts to the Appropriations Committee, it gives control of the accounts to the full House. If the House voted to adopt an amendment to dedicate savings to spending reduction, the limit on the amount the Appropriations Committee could spend (the section 302(a) and (b) allocations) would be automatically reduced. Since the House does not control the Senate, it provides a procedure to allow the amount in the spending reduction account to be modified as part of a conference agreement on an appropriations bill. If the conference report on an appropriations bill proposed to reduce the amount in the spending reduction account, the full House would vote to approve that reduction (as part of the rule providing for consideration of the conference report). If the House voted to reduce the amount of savings in the spending reduction account, the spending limit (the section 302(a) and (b) allocations) would automatically be increased by that amount.

Broadens Definition of an “Appropriations bill”. The spending reduction account in H.Res. 5 is limited to “general appropriations bills.” The amendment would expand the definition to include all appropriations measures, including continuing resolutions and supplementals.

Budget Committee Reporting. It requires the Budget Committee to maintain and publish the Congressional Record the amounts in the spending reduction account, along with any changes made to the section 302(a) allocation to the Appropriations Committee.