

# THE SOUTH CAROLINA BLUES FEDERAL POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE



February 2020

## Appropriations 101

### What are appropriations?

Appropriations are annual decisions made by Congress about how the federal government spends some of its money. In general, they address discretionary funds and exclude mandatory spending which is spent according to formulas.

### How does Congress determine the level of appropriations?

President submits the Administration's budget to Congress. House and Senate budget committees report a budget resolution. If reconciled, it goes to a budget conference. The budget resolution, aka concurrent resolution, is known as a 302(a) allocation that sets a total amount of money for the Appropriations Committees to spend. In the absence of a resolution, each chamber may enact a deeming resolution for 302(a) allocation for that chamber. Discretionary spending is subject to statutory spending caps. For 2020 and 2021, the caps set by the Budget Control Act will be reduced by about \$90 billion annually through sequestration.

### How does Congress allocate appropriations?

Both chamber Appropriations Committees set 302(2) allocations to divide total appropriations among the 12 subcommittees dealing with different parts of the budget. The subcommittees decide how to distribute funds and then they are voted on by their respective Appropriations Committees. Each subcommittee must propose a bill that will pass both chambers and be signed by the President in order to take effect. Many bills are combined into an omnibus or minibus appropriations bill.

### How are appropriations levels enforced?

If any appropriations bill or amendment in either chamber exceeds the 302(b) allocation for that bill, causes total spending to exceed the 302(a) allocation, or causes total spending to exceed the statutory spending caps, any Member of Congress can raise a budget "point of order" against consideration of the bill. The House can waive the point of order by a simple majority as part of the bill's rule for floor consideration, and the Senate can override it through a 60-vote majority. If, despite these points of order, Congress enacts legislation increasing spending beyond the defense or non-defense caps, then the President must issue a sequestration order to reduce discretionary spending across the board in the category in which the caps were exceeded, effective 15 days after Congress adjourns for the year. Importantly, certain types of discretionary spending – including OCO and designated emergencies – do not count against the statutory caps.

### What is the timeline for appropriations?

The President must submit his budget request by the first Monday in February and for Congress to agree to a concurrent resolution by April 15. The House may begin consideration of appropriations bills on May 15 even if a budget resolution has not been adopted and should complete action by June 30. The deadline for passage of appropriations is October 1 when the next fiscal year begins.

### What happens if appropriations bills do not pass by October 1?

Federal funding will lapse resulting in a government shutdown. To avoid a shutdown, Congress may pass a continuing resolution to extend funding.

### What is a continuing resolution?

A temporary bill that continues funding programs based on a fixed formula or the prior year's levels.

*Source: Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget*



## History of the State of the Union Address

An “annual message” has been written since 1790; however, it began to informally be called the “state of the union address” in 1947. The purpose was centered on the President having the ability to formally provide Congress information and recommend to their consideration such measures he judges as necessary and expedient.

Initially, the message centered on budget requests and economic reports. Over time, the message content has changed to provide lengthy administrative reports on various departments of the executive branch as well as a budget and economic message.

In 1913, President Wilson was the first to read his message to Congress in person and has since become a platform for the President to rally support for his agenda.

Technological advancements started allowing the President to present his message to the American people over the radio in 1923 under President Coolidge, first television broadcast in 1947 under President Truman, first live webcast in 2002 under President Bush, and first high definition television broadcast in 2004 under President Bush.

The longest address is held by President Carter in 1981 with 33,667 words. The shortest address is held by President Washington in 1790 with 1,089 words. Average length for the 20<sup>th</sup> century runs around 5,000 words.

The National Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 require that the address be delivered to Congress no more than two weeks after they reconvene in January. **Catch this year’s address on February 4, 2020 at 9:00 p.m. on all major US broadcast and cable television networks or ABC News via YouTube.**



SC BLUES FEDPAC  
POLITICAL BOOK CLUB

*With All Due Respect*  
by Nikki Haley

Meeting Date: 2/13/20  
Tower Private Dining  
12 - 1 pm



Wednesday, March 25, 2020  
Segra Park  
Gates Open at 5 P.M.

PAC members and their families are invited to attend our 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative Softball game between the Senate Filibusters and House Amenders at Segra Park. Join us for a great night of family fun and good food. The gates open at 5 pm and first pitch is at 6pm. Event is rain or shine.

## Election Spotlight

February 3 – Iowa Caucuses  
February 4 – State of the Union Address  
February 7 – Democratic Debate in NH  
February 11 – New Hampshire Primaries  
February 19 – Democratic Debate in Las Vegas  
February 22 – Democratic Caucus in Nevada  
February 25 – Democratic Primary Debate in SC  
February 29 – Democratic Primary in SC

## Upcoming PAC Events

**Lunch ‘n Learn @ Pipeline** - 3/5/20  
**Lunch ‘n Learn @ Percival** - 3/6/20  
**Lunch ‘n Learn @ Florence** - 3/18/20  
**Lunch ‘n Learn @ Surfside** - 3/19/20  
**“Back the PAC” Campaign in April**  
*More details to come*