THE AMERICAN CONGRESS
THIRD EDITION

STEVEN S. SMITH, JASON ROBERTS, AND RYAN VANDER WIELEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE and the
WEIDENBAUM CENTER ON THE ECONOMY, GOVERNMENT, AND PUBLIC POLICY
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONGRESS AND BUDGET POLITICS

The federal budget—more than $2.2 trillion in fiscal year 2004—is often the center of congressional politics. While many citizens are bored to tears when the details of spending and tax policy are discussed, the budget reflects fundamental choices about the role of government in American life and action on the annual budget tends to generate the most partisan fights in Washington. The twists and turns of budget politics have strongly influenced winners and losers in elections, reshaped congressional decision-making processes, and altered the distribution of power within Congress.

Federal budgeting since the 1970s has been a roller-coaster ride. Beginning in the late 1970s and continuing for more than a decade, the presidents and Congress struggled with annual deficits. In fiscal year 1992, the federal government spent about $290 billion more than it received from taxes and other revenues. To pay the interest on the debt that had accumulated over the years (nearly $4 trillion by that point), the federal government spent a little more than $200 billion—about 14 percent of its $1.5 trillion budget for fiscal year 1992. By 1998, the budget picture had improved markedly. Fiscal year 1998 ended with a small surplus, and annual surpluses were achieved in the three following years. Deficits returned by late 2001 during an economic recession that may have been stretched longer by concerns about the war on terrorism and a war in Iraq. The fight against terrorism prompted increases in defense and homeland security spending. The sluggish economy increased demands on social programs and cut revenues. A cut enacted in 2001 cut farther into revenues. Large deficits were looming again by 2002.

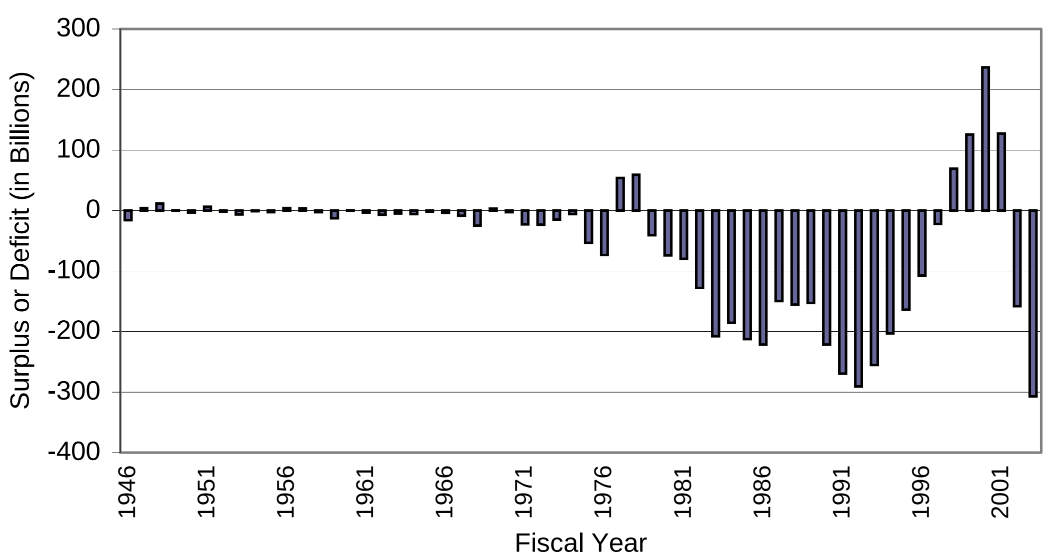
During the past three decades, conflict stimulated by budget deficits has produced a series of procedural innovations in the way Congress drafts the budget. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the process was modified to force congressional committees to write legislation that would either reduce spending or raise more revenue. Since then, the emphasis has been on enforcing multiyear budget plans. Each development was a response to a concern among legislators who were critical to gaining approval of a new budget package or to concerns of the president.

This is an important story. Step-by-step, the changes in rules reshaped the congressional decision-making process, contributed to heightened partisanship, and shifted the relative power of party and committee leaders. Cumulatively, these changes proved so important that they warrant special attention in this chapter.

Overview of the Federal Budget

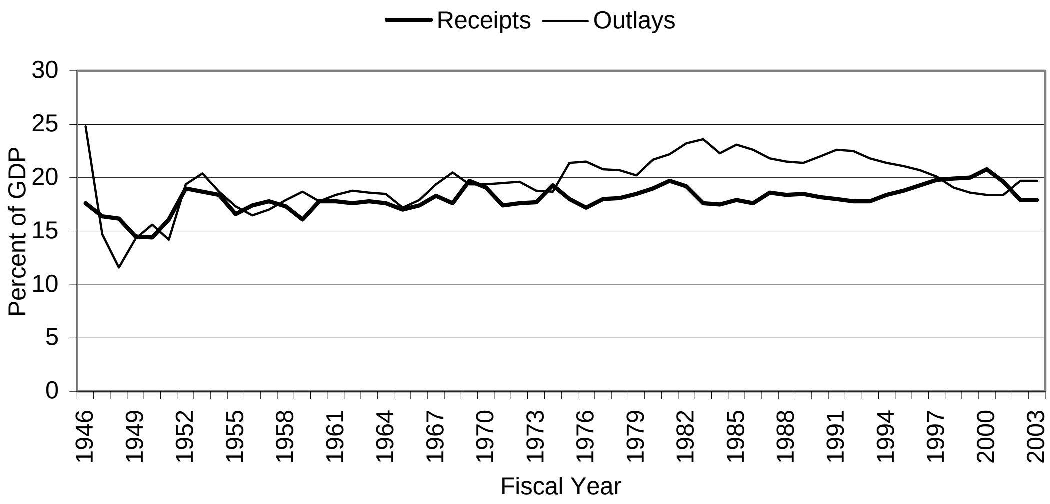
Figure 12.1 shows the history of the federal deficit since the end of World War II. In the aftermath of the war, the federal government managed small annual budget surpluses about as often as it experienced budget deficits. In the 1960s, small deficits were the norm. Deficits crept upward during the 1970s and became a dominant issue in the 1980 presidential campaign, which ended with the election of the Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan, and a Republican majority in the Senate. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the deficit never came close to dropping back to the level experienced in 1980, Jimmy Carter's last year as president. The deficit contracted a little in the mid-1980s but returned to a pattern of continued growth thereafter. President Clinton confronted this situation when he entered office in 1993. Clinton left office after surpluses had returned.

Figure 12.1. Annual Surplus (+) or Deficit (-), in Billions of Dollars, for Fiscal Years 1946-2003.



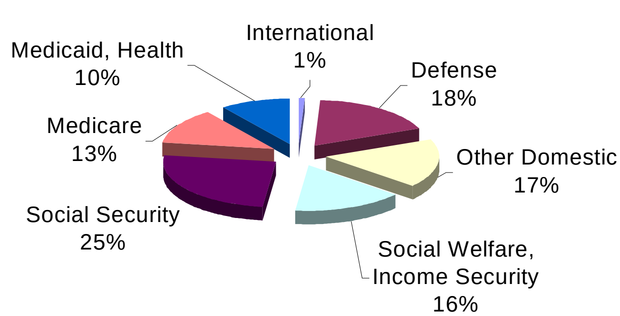
The graph in Figure 12.1 is misleading in one important respect. The federal deficit must be seen in the context of the overall size of the U.S. economy, which has grown a great deal in the last half century. Figure 12.2 shows the size of federal expenditures and revenues as percentages of the gross domestic product (GDP), an annual measure of all of the goods and services produced in the United States. The figure demonstrates that federal revenues as a percentage of GDP have been fairly stable since World War II, seldom reaching 20 percent of GDP.

Figure 12.2. Federal Receipts and Outlays as a Percent of Gross Domestic Product, Fiscal Years 1946-2003.



The increase in federal outlays during the 1980s was primarily the result of two factors. Higher defense spending accounted for about half of the overall increase in expenditures between 1979 and 1983. Most of the rest of the increase—and nearly all of it since the mid-1980s—was due to the rising cost of entitlement programs. Entitlements are provisions in law that guarantee individuals certain benefits if they meet eligibility requirements. Social security, Medicare (health care for the elderly), Medicaid (health care for the poor), veterans' benefits, and other income-security programs such as pensions are examples of entitlement programs. Entitlements have grown so much that they now account for about one-half of federal expenditures, as Figure 12.3 shows.

Figure 12.3. Major Categories of Federal Spending, Fiscal 2001.



Creating a Congressional Budget Process: 1974

In the early 1970s, interest in budget reform was spurred by chronic deficits and political tensions between the Democratic Congress and a Republican president.[1] In retrospect, the deficits of that period seem small, but they were unprecedented for a time without a declared war. The shortfall was largely the result of new and expensive domestic initiatives (President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program), and the Vietnam War. Promising to gain control of the budget, Republican Richard Nixon won the 1968 presidential election and then proceeded to engage in intense battles with the Democratic Congress over spending and taxes. These battles motivated Congress to strengthen its own budget-making capacities by adopting the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, usually called the Budget Act of 1974.

Congressionally Speaking . . .

The *fiscal year* for the federal government begins on October 1 and runs through September of the following year. For example, fiscal year 2005 starts on October 1, 2004, and ends on September 30, 2005. Thus, Congress aims to have spending and tax bills for the next fiscal year enacted by October 1 of each year. The president proposes a budget in February, leaving Congress less than eight months to act on it. Failure to pass bills that approve spending for federal agencies, called *appropriations bills*, may force a shutdown of some government agencies. In most such cases, Congress passes *continuing resolutions*, which are joint resolutions of Congress that authorize temporary spending authority at the last year's level or at some percentage of that level.

The Budget Act created a process for coordinating the actions of the appropriations, authorizing, and tax committees. Each May, Congress would pass a preliminary budget resolution setting nonbinding targets for expenditures and revenues. During the summer, Congress would pass the individual bills authorizing and appropriating funds for federal programs, as well as any new tax legislation. Then, in September, Congress would adopt a second budget resolution, providing final spending ceilings. This resolution might require adjustments to some of the decisions made during the summer months. Those adjustments would be reflected in the second resolution, and additional legislation, written by the proper committees, would then be drafted to make the necessary changes. This process of adjustment was labeled "reconciliation," to reflect the need to reconcile the earlier decisions with the second budget resolution. The reconciliation legislation was to be enacted by October 1, the first day of the federal government's fiscal year.

The Budget Act provided for two new committees, the House and Senate Budget Committees. The budget committees write the budget resolutions and package reconciliation legislation from various committees ordered to adjust the programs under their jurisdiction. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) was created by the act to provide Congress with nonpartisan, expert analyses of the economy and budget.

The Budget Act also modified Senate floor procedures in a critical way. The act barred nongermane amendments and set a limit of twenty hours on debate over budget resolutions and reconciliation legislation. These rules mean that budget measures cannot be loaded with extraneous floor amendments or killed by a Senate filibuster. However, the rules did not restrict the kinds of provisions committees could write into budget measures. Consequently, the door was left open for committees to include in reconciliation bills legislation unrelated to spending cuts, and this became a common practice once reconciliation bills became a central feature of the budget-making process in the 1980s.

Congressionally Speaking . . .

During the early 1970s, the Nixon administration began to cut off funds for programs opposed by the president. That is, the president unilaterally stopped spending for programs for which funds had been appropriated by law. The practice, known as *impoundment*, created a constitutional crisis. Many members of Congress charged the president with violating his constitutional responsibility to see that the laws are faithfully executed. The courts agreed, for the most part, although some programs had been irreparably harmed by the time a court had ruled on the issue.

Congress responded in its 1974 budget reforms by providing for two types of impoundments—rescissions and deferrals. To permanently withhold funds for a particular purpose (make a rescission), a president would have to gain prior approval from both houses of Congress. To temporarily delay spending (make a deferral), a president would only have to notify Congress, and the president could defer spending unless either house specifically disapproved.

In 1983, when the Supreme Court ruled in a case involving immigration law that the legislative veto is unconstitutional, it ruled that the provision for congressional disapproval of a presidential *deferral* of spending was also plainly unconstitutional. This created the possibility of the administration's "deferring" unwanted spending without fear of a congressional response—in effect, using a deferral like a rescission, but without the requirement of prior congressional approval. That is just what the Reagan administration did in some instances. Congress responded in 1987 by formally limiting the deferral authority to routine administrative matters. In addition, Congress has used appropriations bills to overturn some deferrals.

Reducing the Discretion of Committees: 1980 and 1981

The new budget process worked smoothly during its first four years, primarily because congressional Democrats did not use budget resolutions to constrain or compel action from appropriations, authorizing, or tax committees. But in 1979 and 1980, the last two years of the Carter administration, escalating deficits spurred a search for new means to control spending. An effort in 1979 to include reconciliation instructions to committees in the second budget resolution ended in failure, in part because of resistance from some committees to reducing spending on programs under their jurisdiction. Confronting projections of a rapidly rising deficit and a reelection campaign in 1980, President Carter and Democratic congressional leaders agreed to include reconciliation instructions in the first budget resolution, adopted in May. That is, they decided to order some committees to report legislation that would reduce spending at a point in the process before the usual authorization and appropriations legislation was considered. This meant that the initiative would shift from the various authorizing committees to the budget and party leaders, who together with administration officials would devise the reconciliation instructions. The innovation worked. The 1980 reconciliation legislation reduced the deficit by $8.2 billion, through a combination of spending cuts and tax increases. Strangely, the term reconciliation was and still is used, even though it ostensibly refers to the process of reconciling the decisions of the summer months with the second budget resolution.

Republicans learned from the experience of the Carter years and used reconciliation instructions to force much deeper cuts in domestic programs after they took over the White House and the Senate after the 1980 elections.[2] The Republicans managed to gain adoption of reconciliation instructions and pass a reconciliation bill that cut spending for fiscal 1982 by about $37 billion.

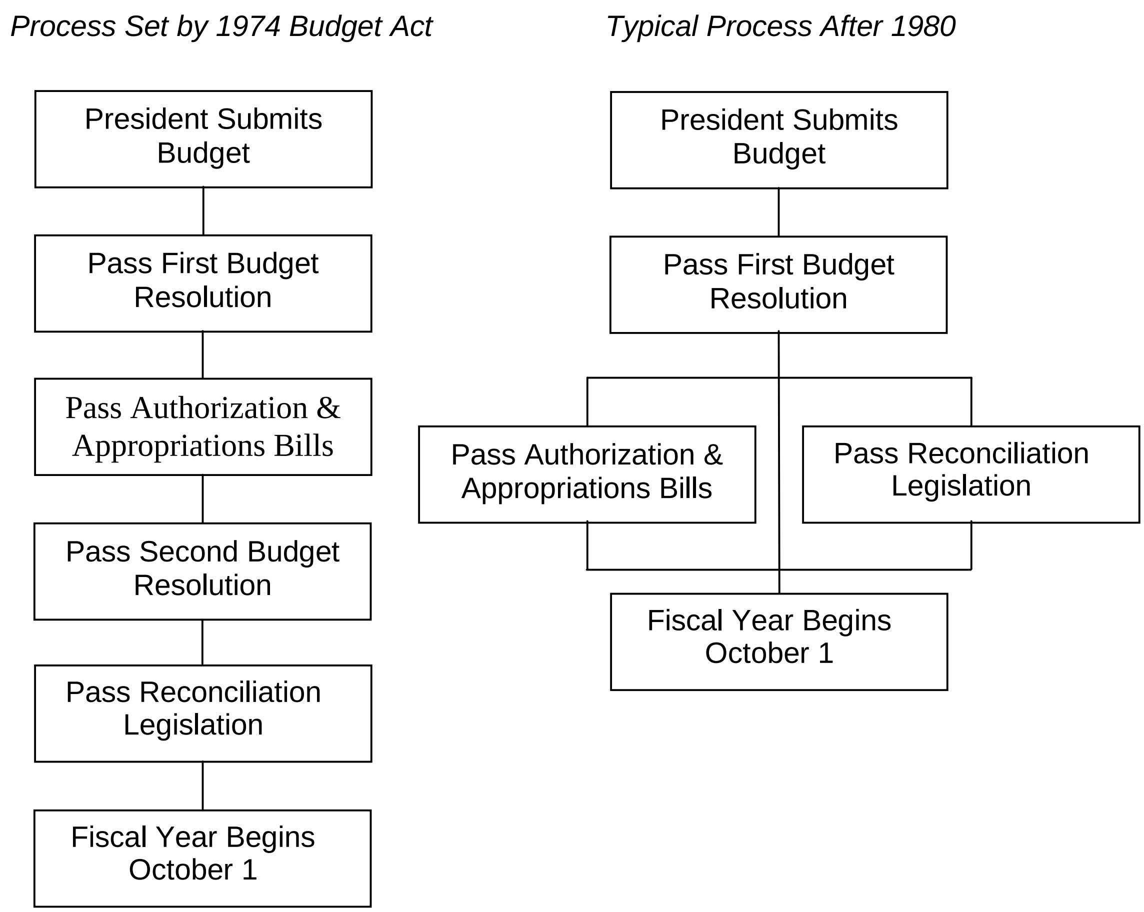
Figure 12.4 illustrates how the inclusion of reconciliation instructions in the first budget resolution has altered the budget process. Reconciliation, authorization, and appropriations legislation now proceed simultaneously, so there is no need for a second budget resolution.

Deficit Reduction Targets: 1985 and 1987

The savings achieved by the 1981 reconciliation bill were more than offset by a large tax cut enacted in separate legislation that year, continued increases in entitlement spending, and the budget crisis intensified in the early 1980s. A tax increase in 1982—initiated by Senate Republicans and quietly accepted by President Reagan—helped reduce the deficit a little, but it was not enough to change its long-term upward trajectory.

In 1985, a trio of senators—Republicans Phil Gramm (Texas) and Warren Rudman (New Hampshire) and Democrat Ernest Hollings (South Carolina)—pushed a seemingly irresistible amendment to a debt-ceiling bill. Debt-ceiling bills establish the amount of outstanding debt the federal government is permitted to carry. With ongoing budget deficits, the debt ceiling must be raised from time to time; failing to raise it when needed would, theoretically, force the federal government to default on its loan and bond payments. Thus, to avoid a financial crisis, members of Congress must vote for periodic increases to the debt ceiling. During the Reagan-Bush years, this task was particularly distasteful for congressional Republicans, who took pride in their party's fiscal responsibility. The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings amendment was designed to guarantee future reductions in the deficit by requiring automatic spending cuts if Congress failed to meet preset spending targets. By attaching their deficit-reduction proposal to the must-pass debt-ceiling bill, the three senators forced the House and the White House to deal with the proposal and made it more palatable for Republicans to vote for the debt-ceiling bill.

Figure 12.4. Steps in the Budget Process.



The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings proposal was adopted as the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. It provided for reducing the deficit by $36 billion in each of the following five years, so that the deficit would drop from about $172 billion in fiscal year 1986 to zero in fiscal year 1991. If Congress failed to meet any year's deficit target by more than $10 billion, as determined by the comptroller general (who heads the General Accounting Office), across-the-board cuts in spending would be ordered by an amount necessary to reduce the deficit to the specified level. This process of withholding a certain percentage of funding from programs was called "sequestration." Sequestration, it was argued, would be so distasteful to lawmakers that Congress and the president would be motivated to find a way to reduce the deficit without triggering the automatic cuts. If Congress and the president failed to do the job, sequestration would do it for them.

To reinforce this deficit-reduction scheme, the 1985 law barred floor amendments to budget resolutions and reconciliation measures that would raise the projected deficit beyond specified levels. A point of order could be made against any ineligible amendment. But the Senate had a history of overruling its presiding officer on points of order and faced dozens of popular nongermane amendments to the reconciliation bill considered in the fall of 1985. Senator Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia) therefore proposed, and the Senate approved, a new rule that provided that the presiding officer's ruling on the germaneness of an amendment to a reconciliation bill could not be overturned unless a three-fifths majority agreed. The rule reinforced the 1974 Budget Act's restrictions on floor amendments and debate and made Senate rules governing the content of budget measures and amendments to them even more restrictive than those in the House.

On paper, Congress and the president met the deficit targets in the next three fiscal years. But in each case this was accomplished through a remarkable combination of creative accounting and absurdly optimistic estimates about the economy, future demands on federal programs, and the next year's revenues. "Blue smoke and mirrors" became the catch phrase used to describe federal budgeting. As a result of this budgetary legerdemain, the actual deficit in fiscal 1988 turned out to be $155 billion rather than the targeted $108 billion.

Congressionally Speaking . . .

Only a few congressional rules are known by the name of their original author. One of them is the Byrd rule, named after Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-West Virginia), the former majority leader and former Appropriations Committee chair.

The *Byrd rule* bars extraneous matter from reconciliation bills. A provision is considered to be extraneous if it does not change spending or revenues, concerns issues that lie outside of the jurisdiction of the committee reporting it, or leads to a net increase in spending or decrease in revenues for the years beyond those covered by the bill. In addition, strangely, any change in social security, Washington's political sacred cow, is considered a violation of the Byrd rule.

The rule is enforced by points of order raised by senators from the floor and upheld by a ruling of the chair, who depends on the advice of the Senate parliamentarian. The Senate may overturn the ruling of the chair as long as sixty senators agree. If a point of order is successful, either through a ruling of the presiding officer or by a vote, the entire bill falls. The rule gives a sizable minority the ability to force certain kinds of provisions from reconciliation bills. It is one of the few places in which Senate rules are more restrictive than House rules.

In the fall of 1987, another debt-ceiling bill presented an opportunity to restart the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings process.[3] Congress attached to the bill a new set of targets, this time moving the zero-deficit deadline back to 1993. The measure also made it more difficult for the Senate to waive the deficit targets, by requiring a three-fifths rather than a simple majority vote. And it postponed the sequester for 1987 from October 1 to November 20. But many observers, including stock market investors, thought that merely restarting the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings process was woefully inadequate, a view that appeared to contribute to a crash in the stock market on October 19.

The stock market crash and the November 20 sequester deadline propelled Congress and President Reagan to reach a new agreement. The agreement was unique because it provided special spending ceilings for defense and non-defense spending for a two-year period—fiscal 1987 and 1988. This allowed the Reagan administration to end with a truce with Congress on the budget. Neither party was eager to continue the battle into the election year of 1988.

Spending Ceilings, Firewalls, and PAYGO: 1990

The partisan war over the budget resumed in 1989, the first year of the Republican George H.W. Bush administration. By late 1989, it was clear that the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings procedure had been a failure. Instead of a $100 billion deficit, as targeted in the 1987 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, the deficit turned out to be a record $221 billion because of a slumping economy. The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings procedure was shown to have a major weakness: the absence of a means for forcing further reductions during a fiscal year for which the original deficit estimates had been too optimistic.[4]

The 1990 budget package set a new direction for enforcing agreements, as indicated by its title—the Budget Enforcement Act (BEA).[5] The 1990 BEA focused on spending limits rather than deficit reduction *per se*. For fiscal years 1991 to 1993, the BEA provided for three categories of non-entitlement spending (defense, international, and domestic) and established spending ceilings for each. These ceilings were to be adjusted for inflation each year so that economic conditions would not make them more or less onerous. If a category's ceiling was exceeded, sequestration would apply only to programs within that category—thus, this process is called categorical sequestration. "Firewalls" were established between the categories by prohibiting the transfer of funds between categories. In this way, Republicans would not fear a raid on defense funding to increase domestic spending, and Democrats did not have to worry about transfers in the opposite direction.

The 1990 BEA added teeth to the budget-making process by requiring that all tax and direct spending legislation be deficit-neutral. That is, if a bill cut taxes or increased spending, it also would have to provide fully offsetting tax increases or spending cuts. This pay-as-you-go mechanism—known as PAYGO—was enforced by a provision allowing any member to raise a point of order against a bill on the grounds that it was not deficit-neutral. If a bill that was not deficit-neutral were to sneak through, a sequester on spending in the appropriate category would be applied.

Finally, the focus on spending ceilings rather than deficit-reduction targets meant that Congress and the president had given up on the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings approach. On the one hand, if the economy slumped and revenues declined, the deficit would go up even if the spending ceilings were obeyed. On the other hand, if the economy hummed along, spending would be controlled as expected, revenues would flow into the Treasury faster than expected, and the increased revenues would serve to reduce the deficit.

The 1990 budget deal made it more difficult for authorizing and tax committees to propose new policy initiatives. Legislation that would create a new program that entailed spending would have to provide for spending cuts somewhere else. Tax-writing committees could not propose legislation to grant tax breaks to some groups or industries unless they increased taxes or cut spending elsewhere. The net winners under the 1990 rules seemed to be the appropriations committees. Although they had to operate under the spending ceilings, the ceilings were viewed as reasonably generous, given the programs that had to be funded, and would be adjusted for inflation. The appropriators also had substantial flexibility on how to set priorities within the broad categories.

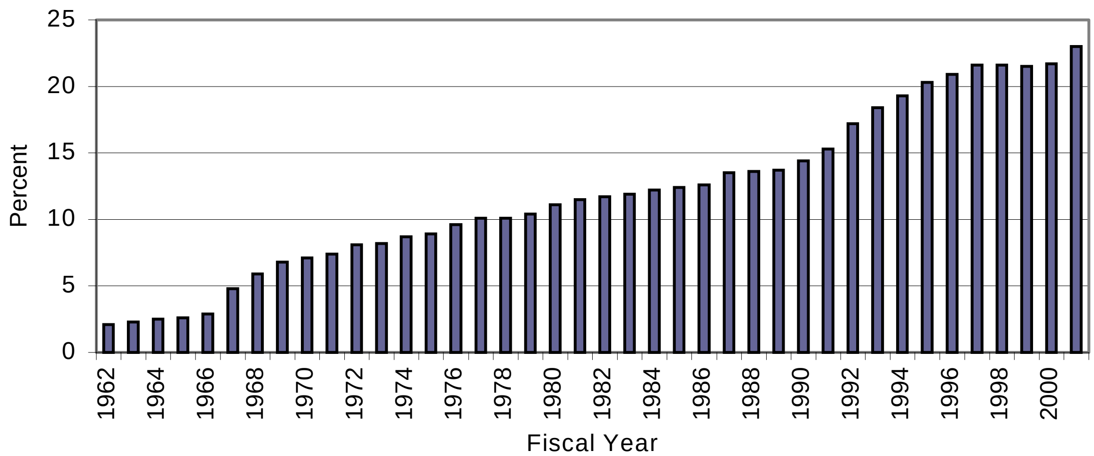
Unfortunately for President Bush, deficits shot upward in 1991 and 1992, despite the fact that domestic discretionary spending was constrained. The economy did not perform well, which reduced revenues over those two years by nearly $90 billion from what had been predicted in 1990.[6] The slow economy contributed to increased spending on entitlements—particularly Medicare, Medicaid, and farm price supports—outside of the discretionary spending ceilings. Unanticipated expenditures for the Persian Gulf War and disaster aid to help Florida and Hawaii recover from hurricanes added to the deficit. The 1992 deficit of $290 billion was nearly $140 billion larger than the deficit in 1989, Bush's first year in office. Bush eventually declared that the 1990 budget deal was a mistake, but the confession was not enough to win him a second term.

Deficit-Reducing Trust Fund and Entitlement Review: 1993

Congress demonstrated remarkable creativity in devising new rules and processes for budgeting during the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s. But the impressive array of budgetary enforcement devices—reconciliation, sequestration, points of order, spending ceilings, PAYGO, and firewalls—did not seem to improve the bottom line. Deficits were never put on a downward path during the Reagan and Bush administrations, as the major deficit-reduction packages had promised. By the time Bill Clinton was sworn in as president in January 1993, the public was deeply cynical about federal budgetary politics, the annual deficit was at a record high, and the deficit was a major obstacle to the new president's other policy objectives.

Entitlement spending, particularly health care spending, spurred large annual increases in the budget. As Figure 12.5 demonstrates, the escalating costs of health care programs posed serious threats to deficit control. The major government health care programs, Medicare and Medicaid, are entitlement programs for the elderly and the poor. Cutting those programs entails either reducing the number of eligible people, which is an unpopular option, or cutting payments to hospitals, doctors, and state governments. Reducing payments, however, leads hospitals and doctors to shift their costs to people with private insurance, thereby increasing the cost of health care for everyone else.

Figure 12.5. Health Spending as a Percent of
Total Federal Outlays, 1962-2001.



Source: *Budget of the United States Government*, Fiscal Year 2003, Historical Tables, p. 299.

Domestic programs that do not involve entitlements—most education, law enforcement, transportation, housing, energy, research, construction, and space programs—have declined as a percentage of GDP since 1980. Most federal programs were cut or frozen, in terms of constant dollars, during the 1980s. In most cases, further cuts would mean a basic change in the direction of public policies that are popular or have strong constituencies. Moreover, defense spending has been on a downward path for several years.

In 1993, President Clinton sought increases for some domestic programs, cuts in others and in defense, and some tax increases, all in the hope of reducing the deficit by $500 billion over five years. The Democrats decided to move budget measures at a more rapid pace and to incorporate Clinton’s proposed tax increases in the reconciliation bill. Placing the tax increases in the reconciliation bill had important advantages for the Democrats. Selling never-popular tax increases might be easier as a part of a larger deficit-reduction package. Furthermore, reconciliation instructions to committees set deadlines on reporting legislation. This meant that the two tax-writing committees, House Ways and Means and Senate Finance, could not indefinitely delay the tough decisions about taxes. And just as important, reconciliation bills are subject to a twenty-hour limit on debate in the Senate, which protects them from filibusters and nongermane amendments. These special budget procedures meant that Republican opponents of the tax legislation could not delay Senate action.

The administration's plan ran into serious difficulty with conservative Democrats, however, and as had happened in past years, the president's plan was adopted only once. New procedural devices—a deficit-reduction trust fund and a mandatory review of entitlement spending—were invented to satisfy legislators who lacked confidence in the legislation's goals. To mollify his party's conservatives, Clinton agreed to create a deficit-reduction trust fund. The plan provided that an amount equal to the projected deficit reduction from the bill be placed in a trust fund that could be used only to pay maturing public debt obligations.[7] The trust fund innovation proved insufficient to satisfy many conservative Democrats, however, so an agreement was reached between Democratic leaders and leading conservatives to make highly privileged legislation to address entitlement spending if such spending ultimately exceeded the levels assumed by the budget bill. In this way, the conservatives were assured that Congress would consider more serious entitlement reform if the budget plan proved too optimistic. With this agreement in place, a sufficient number of the party's fiscal conservatives supported the reconciliation bill for it to pass, 219 to 213. No Republicans voted for it, and thirty-eight Democrats still voted against it.

After returning from a recess, the House Democratic caucus met to consider taking action against the eleven subcommittee chairs who had voted against the reconciliation bill (no full committee chairs did so). The renegade subcommittee chairs were the objects of passionate denunciations from colleagues, who felt that members holding leadership posts owed their party a measure of loyalty. A "leadership scorecard" that circulated at the meeting showed that the eleven chairs exhibited low levels of support on important issues, which led some Democrats to demand that they be replaced immediately. And some Democrats insisted on an immediate change in the caucus rules to require that all subcommittee chairs, not just those on the Appropriations Committee, be elected by the full party caucus. No action was taken. Democratic leaders convinced their colleagues that the subcommittee chairs had been given a strong warning about the caucus's expectations on future votes and suggested that a rules change be considered after the next election.[8]

In the Senate, six Democrats voted against the reconciliation bill, but there was no talk of retaliating against them. Indeed, the Senate's intense individualism was demonstrated by the absence of discussion about the possibility of disciplinary action against the six wayward Democrats, two of whom (Bennett Johnston and Sam Nunn) were full committee chairs. To be sure, the behavior of Johnston, Nunn, and the others was not appreciated by many of their colleagues. But in contrast to the reflexive, get-their-scalps response of many House Democrats to their deviant colleagues, the attitude among senators seemed to be simply "senators are like that." The necessity of obtaining individual senators' cooperation to move even routine legislation contributes to the strong individualism of the Senate.

The conference committee negotiations on the bill occurred almost entirely among Democrats. Their problem was a common one for the Democrats—how to keep liberals satisfied with commitments for domestic spending without raising taxes to the point that the party's conservatives would object. To make matters worse, a deadline of sorts loomed for approving the bill. The August recess was scheduled to begin at the end of the week of August 2. The Democrats did not want their internal divisions to delay the recess and give Republicans an opportunity to score political points by claiming that the Democrats had failed to end gridlock in Washington. Protecting the party's public image, as well as its policy objectives, appeared to motivate the Democratic leaders, and the conference's many staff assistants labored through several nights to produce the 1,800-page conference report.

As House and Senate leaders began to reveal the compromises they were making on various details of the conference report, some conservative Democrats who had supported the reconciliation bill indicated their intention to vote against the conference report. To appease at least some of them, President Clinton acted unilaterally to add credibility to the promise that the new tax revenues would be used to reduce the deficit rather than to increase spending. By executive order, he created the trust fund discussed previously and established an entitlement review process to measure whether legislators were abiding by the budget plan's requirements. Moreover, the House would adopt, as a part of a special rule for the conference report, a requirement that it act on new legislation to address any overages in entitlement spending when they occur. No provisions were made to bind the Senate to the same process, but House action on entitlement spending in future budget resolutions would force the Senate to confront the issue.[9]

Even with these last-minute concessions, the outcome eventually turned on the vote of a freshman member, Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, a Democrat from a Republican-leaning district just outside Philadelphia. She had voted against the president's position on the budget resolution and on passage of the House bill, but reportedly she had promised her support if her vote turned out to be pivotal—no doubt hoping it would not be. Early in the fifteen-minute period for the vote, Margolies-Mezvinsky cast a no vote. But with no time left in the vote, the Democrats had only 216 votes—two votes short of a majority—so the Speaker held the vote open. Ray Thorton (D-Arkansas), who had not yet voted, signed a red voting card to vote no. Only if both Margolies-Mezvinsky and Pat Williams (D-Montana) changed their votes to yes would the conference report pass. Williams was a fourteen-year veteran Democrat from Montana who had made the same promise as Margolies-Mezvinsky. Williams changed his vote first, and then all eyes fell on Margolies-Mezvinsky, who was being ushered to the front desk by a group of colleagues. The Republicans chanted, "Goodbye, Marjorie," referring to her reelection prospects if she voted against them. She signed a green card to vote yes, and the Speaker gaveled the vote closed.[10]

Margolies-Mezvinsky spent the next few days explaining her vote. She appeared on local television and radio; was interviewed on National Public Radio, the *MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour*, and CNN's *Moneyline*; and immediately aired radio ads in her district to explain her vote. Her explanation was that she had extracted an important promise from the president. Minutes before the vote, she was called to the phone to talk to the president. Asked what it would take to get her vote, she told the president that she wanted a high-level conference for a serious discussion of cutting entitlement spending. Clinton said, "You got it," so she agreed to vote yes.[11] The next week, Secretary of Health and

Human Services Donna Shalala traveled to Philadelphia to discuss plans for the conference. The full conference finally took place in December, with the president in attendance. Margolies-Mezvinsky lost her bid for reelection in 1994.

The Senate outcome came down to the decision of Senator Bob Kerrey, a Nebraska Democrat. Kerrey, who had acquired the nickname “Cosmic Bob” during his failed 1992 presidential bid, frustrated the White House because there were no particular provisions or promises of future action that he was looking for that could be used to get him to vote yes. Several talks with Clinton did not clarify Kerrey’s position. Finally, hours before the Senate vote, Kerrey went to the Senate floor to announce his decision. He said, in part:

> Mr. President, I have taken too long, I am afraid, to reach this decision. My head, I confess, aches with all the thinking. But my heart aches with the conclusion that I will vote “yes” for a bill which challenges America too little, because I do not trust what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will do if I say no.
>
> Individually, the Republicans in this body are fine and able people, patriots, parents, God-fearing citizens who came here to serve their country as every other Member of this body.
>
> Collectively, however, you have locked yourselves together into the idea of opposition; opposition, not to an idea, but to a man—a man who came to this town green and inexperienced in our ways, and who wants America to do better, to be better, and to continue to believe in the invincibility of ideas, of courage and action. . . .
>
> President Clinton, if you are watching now, as I suspect you are, I tell you this: I could not and should not cast a vote that brings down your Presidency. You have made mistakes and know it far better than I. But you do not deserve, and America cannot afford, to have you spend the next sixty days quibbling over whether or not we should have this cut or this tax increase. America also cannot afford to have you take the low road of the too easy compromise, or the too early collapse. You have gotten where you are today because you are strong, not because you are weak. Get back on the high road, Mr. President, where you are at your best. On February 17 you told America the deficit reduction was a moral issue and that shared sacrifice was needed to put it behind us. . . .
>
> You had the right idea, Mr. President, with the BTU tax. And when we came after you with both barrels blazing, threatening to walk if you did not yield, you should have let us walk. You should have said to us that at least we would be exercising something other than our mouths. . . .
>
> I am sympathetic, Mr. President. I know how loud our individual threats can be. But I implore you, Mr. President, say no to us. Get us back on the high ground where we actually prefer to be. This legislation will now become law. As such, it represents a first step. But if it is to be a first step toward regaining the confidence of the American people [in] their Congress and their Federal Government, then we must tell Americans the truth. And the truth is, Mr. President, to spend less means someone must get less. . . .
>
> I began by saying that I do not trust forty-four Republicans enough to say no to this bill. I close by saying that I suspect the feeling is mutual. The challenge for failing is for us to end this distrust and to put this too-partisan debate behind us. For the sake of our place in history, rise to the high road that the occasion requires.[12]

His Democratic colleagues rose in applause. The Republicans watched in silence.

With Kerrey staying with the president, another tie vote was ensured. Once again Vice President Gore cast the deciding vote, and the conference report was approved, 51 to 50.

Tax Cuts, Certification, and Brinkmanship: 1995-1996

Budget legislation became the central battleground for the new Republican majorities elected to the House and Senate in 1994. In 1995, the Republicans failed to gain congressional approval of a constitutional amendment to require an annually balanced budget, but in 1996 they gave the president the line-item veto for spending bills (although it was later struck down by the courts). In the interim, the Republicans pursued a strategy that they thought would compel the president to accept a budget reconciliation bill representing a far different mix of spending and taxing priorities than those contained in the 1993 bill. They failed miserably, allowing the president to regain his popularity.

In designing their budget resolution and reconciliation bill in 1995, the congressional Republican majorities largely ignored the proposals of the Clinton administration. They combined the goal of achieving a balanced budget by 2002—which had been jettisoned in the fight over the 1993 bill—with a plan to cut taxes by $245 billion over seven years, which meant that federal spending had to be cut deeply. They sought to limit Medicaid spending and to give the states administrative responsibility for the program, stem the growth of Medicare, eliminate three executive departments (the Departments of Education, Commerce, and Energy), cut welfare spending, limit environmental regulations, and eliminate dozens of federal programs.

Procedural innovations were once again used to help bridge policy differences. Many senators were concerned that the deep tax cuts proposed would undermine the effort to balance the budget. To gain their support for the budget resolution, a provision was included that required the Finance Committee to wait to mark up tax cut provisions for the reconciliation bill until the Congressional Budget Office had officially certified that the bill would actually balance the federal budget by 2002. In this way, a nonpartisan staff arm of Congress, the CBO, had to approve estimates of the long-term effects of the budget package before a central feature of the package could be finalized.

By the time Congress approved the budget resolution, in the early summer of 1995, the House Republican leadership had devised a strategy that they hoped would gain the president's signature for their reconciliation bill, which would incorporate their spending and tax legislation. The Republicans would refuse to pass two critical sets of legislation—appropriations bills and a debt-ceiling increase—until the president agreed to approve their reconciliation bill. Failure to enact appropriations bills would force many departments to shut down at the end of the fiscal year (at midnight on September 30). Failure to increase the debt ceiling when needed would force the government to stop borrowing and possibly default on its debt obligations and the ceiling would be reached sometime in the fall. The strategy was predicated on the assumption that the Republican budget plan would be popular with the public. The Republicans' view, articulated by Speaker Newt Gingrich, was that the president would not dare to shut down federal services or allow the government to default on its loans to avoid signing their legislation.

Table 12.1. Major Legislation on the Budget Process, 1974-1999.

1974 Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act

Created the modern budgeting process, established the budget committees, and provided for congressional review of presidential rescissions and deferrals.

1980 Reconciliation Bill

Provided that (for the first time) reconciliation be used at the start of the budget process. Committees were required to forward legislation drafted specifically to reduce spending as required by the first budget resolution.

1985 and 1987 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Bill

Set fixed annual targets for deficit reduction and established a sequestration process to bring spending down to levels required to meet targets.

1990 Budget Enforcement Act

Dropped the fixed deficit targets of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings approach and replaced them with caps on spending in domestic, defense, and international budgetary categories; pay-as-you-go rules for spending and revenues; and restrictions on loans and indirect spending.

1993 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act

Modified spending priorities and extended the enforcement provisions of the 1990 act through 1998.

1996 Balanced Budget Act

Modified spending priorities, extended the enforcement provisions of the 1993 act through 2002, and projected a balanced budget in fiscal year 2002.

As the October 1 deadline approached, talk of the "train wreck" that would occur if the appropriations bills were not enacted began to dominate Washington. The reconciliation bill was due on September 22, but that date slipped by as Republicans struggled to resolve differences within their own ranks and finish writing the huge bill. Unfortunately for the Republicans, public enthusiasm for their budget plan had weakened. Rather than trying to force Clinton's hand before they were ready with their bill, the Republicans passed legislation providing temporary spending authority to federal agencies through November 13. The debt ceiling, the Treasury Department predicted, would be reached by about that date.[13] The Republicans finally passed their bill in the last week of October without attempting any negotiations with the administration but action on the bill stalled in conference. By November 13, Congress had failed to pass any appropriations bills or the reconciliation bill, and the debt ceiling was about to be reached. The need for the debt-ceiling bill was now eased, however, because the administration had found ways to juggle money in trust funds to create cash for the government to continue to pay its debt-service obligations.

The Republicans remained eager to force a showdown with the president. They passed an extension of appropriations authority through December 15 and a temporary debt-ceiling increase measure extending the government's borrowing authority to December 12. The debt-ceiling bill included provisions that prevented the president from juggling the trust funds and would revert the debt ceiling to its previous level on December 12. The continuing resolution was designed to be unpalatable to the president—it reduced spending in the affected agencies to just 60 percent of the previous year's level and canceled a scheduled reduction in Medicare premiums.[14]

To the Republicans' surprise, Clinton vetoed both bills. As the administration knew, the Republicans lacked the two-thirds majority in each house required to override a presidential veto. The result was a shutdown of the unfunded federal agencies, forcing about eight hundred thousand "nonessential" federal workers to be furloughed. Additional accounting moves made the veto of the debt-ceiling bill inconsequential, but the shutdown caused by the veto of the continuing resolution proved politically costly—for the Republicans. Although the Republicans blamed the shutdown on Clinton's unwillingness to bargain, the public blamed the Republicans over Clinton by a two-to-one margin. The fact that Republicans had made their strategy so conspicuous but still didn't have a reconciliation bill ready to pass hurt their cause. Worse yet for the Republicans, the president's willingness to take a stand enhanced his standing with the public, giving the president a stronger bargaining position. The Republicans had misjudged Clinton's willingness to veto the bills and had badly miscalculated the general public's response.[15]

Scrambling to determine what to do next, the Republicans adopted another continuing resolution—which ended a six-day shutdown—and soon approved a conference report on the reconciliation bill. It was expected that the reconciliation bill would be vetoed as well, so the issue was how to conduct negotiations to find a version acceptable to the president and to both houses of Congress. The second continuing resolution included a new feature: It stipulated that the president and Congress must agree to a plan to balance the federal budget within seven years—by 2002—using economic estimates provided by the Congressional Budget Office. The Republicans viewed the commitment to a balanced budget as a large victory, but the details of a new budget plan were yet to be negotiated.[16]

Partisan rhetoric sharpened. Differences between the parties over the reconciliation bill continued to concern the size of spending cuts in domestic programs and the size of tax cuts. A handful of regular appropriations bills passed and received presidential approval, but several others remained unfinished by December 15, again forcing a shutdown of many federal agencies, this time involving about 260,000 workers. House Speaker Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole appeared to be willing to pass another continuing resolution, but hard-line House Republicans made it plain that they would not support another resolution. Before they would agree to fund certain federal agencies, they wanted concessions from the president that the president was simply unwilling to grant. The result was that this shutdown lasted twenty-one days.

News stories of hardships suffered by government workers over the holidays worsened the standing of the congressional Republicans in the polls. By the first week of January, Clinton's poll ratings were heading up, and the Republicans were eager to pass continuing resolutions. In fact, they passed three measures—one narrow appropriations bill, to keep the most popular programs funded through September 1996; a second appropriations bin, to fund a couple of other programs through March 15; and a continuing resolution to keep the remaining programs and agencies open just until January 26. Meanwhile, deep divisions among Republicans concerning the efficacy and political costs of their strategy began to emerge.[17]

The debt ceiling loomed on the horizon yet again. The financial adjustments that had allowed the administration to avoid defaulting on the country's debt obligations were just about exhausted. To avoid being blamed for playing games with the debt ceiling, Republican leaders wrote President Clinton that they intended to increase the debt ceiling when required. No progress had been made on the reconciliation bill by January 26, however, so another continuing resolution was enacted. It was now four months after the start of the fiscal year, and still no budget was in place. The process for drafting a budget for the next fiscal year began on February 5, when the president submitted his budget proposals to Congress. Plainly, those proposals meant little in the absence of a budget for the current fiscal year.

Just before March 15, for the fifth time since September of the previous year, a continuing resolution was passed to avoid a shutdown of federal agencies, this time for only a week. This practice of passing short-term continuing resolutions continued for several more weeks. Eventually, late in the evening of April 24, nearly seven months late and after a total of fourteen limited spending bills and short-term continuing resolutions, the president and congressional Republican leaders agreed on a budget. The next day, Republican leaders rushed through to passage an appropriations bill to fund government agencies for the rest of the fiscal year. Compromise spending and tax cuts were quickly enacted.

Omnibus Appropriations: 2002-2003

With the 1996 budget plan in place, the Republicans did not challenge President Clinton on the budget again; instead, they turned to tactical fights on individual appropriations bills. They had no interest in repeating the political disaster of the 1995-1996 budget fight. Many Republican conservatives did not like the Speaker Gingrich's willingness to compromise with Clinton, but, at least in the speaker's view, there was little to be gained by laying down more ultimatums for the president. By the end of 1997, a strong economy, which yielded both reduced spending and increased tax revenues, had cut the deficit much faster than expected. In fact, a balanced budget was achieved in 1998, four years earlier than estimated in the 1996 budget. The large strategic moves of deficit politics were replaced with the less visible, tactical moves of surplus politics, with congressional Republicans and the Democratic president fighting over the details of appropriations bills.

Partisan differences caused four straight years of gamesmanship with appropriations bills. Sparring over spending details routinely led to delays in passing appropriations bills, which required that Congress pass numerous continuing resolutions. Moreover, when agreement was finally reached, compromises often extended over several appropriations bills and many extraneous measures that were packaged in large omnibus appropriations bills. In 1998, for example, eight of the 13 regular appropriations bills and over 30 non-appropriations measures were included in the omnibus appropriations bills for fiscal 1999. In 2000, 21 continuing resolutions were adopted before an omnibus appropriations bill was passed a few days before Christmas. That bill included the provisions of three regular appropriations bills, some new emergency spending, and non-appropriations legislation on Medicare, Medicaid, medical savings accounts and other tax provisions, immigration, and commodities regulation. This multidimensional bill represented many bargains and reflected members' realization that it was the last opportunity to address some issues before that Congress ended.

The political tables had turned in Washington after Republican President George W. Bush was elected in 2000. Bush was in office for less than a year when the 9-11 terrorist attack occurred. The subsequent airline and New York subsidies, homeland security, war on terrorism, and Iraqi buildup cost many tens of billions to the federal government, contributing to the creation of the first deficit after four years of surpluses. A prolonged recession and spending on national security contributed to the deficits, as did a tax cut enacted in 2001 when surpluses were still projected.

In February 2003, President Bush proposed a budget deficit of over $300 billion for fiscal 2004. He proposed more tax cuts, some of which were opposed by at least a few Senate Republicans, and some spending increases. The administration argued that much of the tax proposal and some of the spending hikes were needed to boost the economy. The proposals, if adopted, would require Congress to adjust spending ceilings in the budget enforcement mechanisms.

Budget Reform

Legislators' frustration with the delays and unpredictability of the budget and appropriations process has motivated a number of proposals to reform the process. One of the most popular is to move the federal government to a two-year budget cycle. In principle, a two-year budget would require Congress to pass budget and appropriations legislation only once every two years. Proponents, such as former Senate Budget Chairman Pete Domenici (R-New Mexico), argue that this would give Congress more time to conduct proper oversight of executive agencies. Critics argue that Congress and the president cannot plan for two years in advance and would be forced to pass supplementary appropriations bills. Moreover, they argue, Congress more effectively keeps executive agencies accountable through the annual appropriations process.

The return of deficits was accompanied by failure to pass appropriations bills on time. In 2001, action on appropriations bills was delayed at first by the extra time taken to organize Senate committees and staff (see Chapter 7) and the decision of the Republicans to consider the large tax-cut bill first. But the 9-11 disaster occurred just as the appropriations bills for fiscal 2002 were coming due. All congressional action came to a halt. Soon thereafter, the administration sought $40 billion in supplemental spending to deal with New York and the airlines and Democrats sought additional sums for homeland security. Disagreements between the administration and Congress over the use of the $40 billion, Republican objections to the funds Democrats wanted added to homeland security efforts, and even sharper partisan differences over additional tax cuts in an economic stimulus packages delayed action. None of the 13 regular appropriations bills was pass by October 1, which required the approval of several continuing resolutions until the appropriations bills were passed in November, December, and, finally, in January for the two largest.

Deadlines were missed by a larger margin in late 2002 as the appropriations bills for fiscal 2003 were considered. No appropriations bill was enacted by October 1 and eventually ten continuing resolutions were adopted. Democrats argued that Republicans deliberately delayed action on a few of the bills so that Republicans would not have to cast potentially embarrassing votes just before the 2002 election. Not until January 2003, more than four months after the bills were due to be passed and after a new Congress was in place, did the House and Senate pass an omnibus bill that incorporated 11 of the 13 regular appropriations bills. Conference committee negotiations over the bill were not complete until February—six months late and halfway through the fiscal year.

Conclusion

The history of budgetary politics discussed in this chapter illustrates several important features of congressional politics that have been recurrent themes throughout this book:

1. Legislative outcomes in the United States are the product of a three-player legislative process in which the House, the Senate, and the president must negotiate and reach compromises. In the budget battles described in this chapter, differences in policy preferences among the three institutional players, combined with the necessity of gaining the consent of all three, produced compromised efforts to reduce the deficit and procedural innovations designed to force other players to act.

2. The president is a central player in congressional politics. When the president proposes a change in direction in budget policy, it usually changes Congress's agenda. The president's proposals may be set aside by the majority party in Congress, as they were initially in 1995. Doing so entails great political risks, however. For the party controlling the White House, the president, not the party's congressional leaders, tends to be the chief strategist for the party.

3. The constitutional rules of the game, the rules of the House and Senate, and previous legislation all shape legislative strategies and outcomes, in critical ways. The constitutional requirement of a two-thirds majority in each house to override a presidential veto prevented the majority party in Congress from imposing its budget priorities in 1995 and 1996. Statutory limits on appropriations authority and the debt ceiling proved vital. The Senate rule that prevents extraneous amendments from being attached to budget bills (the Byrd rule) limited the options of House and Senate committees. And enforcement provisions included in previous budget agreements were essential to crafting compromises that the players could trust would be honored. Except for the basic rules outlined in the Constitution, all of these rules were subject to change and became a part of the debate over budget policy.

4. The Budget Act, and how the different players made use of it, altered the traditional relationship between the parent houses and their committees. Historically, committees had taken the initiative in setting the policy agenda and designing legislation within their jurisdictions. The new budget process, however, allowed top party and budget leaders to present comprehensive budget resolutions to the parent houses and required committees to produce legislation, after the fact, that they most certainly would not have drafted had they been left to their own discretion.

5. The rules of the legislative game are not static. The players often turned to new procedural rules to guarantee that promises critical to achieving a compromise would be kept in the future. New enforcement mechanisms were invented on several occasions to convince key groups of legislators that uncertainties about the future would not work to their disadvantage.

6. Elections have clear and powerful effects on policy making. In the history described in this chapter, elections produced realignments in the preferences of key players—the president and members of Congress—concerning budgetary policy. Divided party control of the House, Senate, and White House was the direct product of elections and shaped the players' strategies in basic ways. Less significant, but clearly present, were the effects of election timing. On several occasions, approaching elections tended to dampen partisanship and encourage compromise on the part of the party with the greater

public relations problem. And public opinion polls, which are taken as a gauge of the potential electoral consequences of political events and policy positions, appeared to alter players' strategies on many occasions.

7. Parties are the primary building blocks for creating voting coalitions, but party discipline is far from perfect. Leaders of both the Democratic and the Republican parties, when they were in the majority in Congress, first attempted to satisfy enough fellow party members to create a majority before soliciting support from the other party. In the end, voting on the budget plans, which typically encapsulated the major policy priorities of the majority party, was very partisan. Those party members who voted against the position of their own party leaders were criticized but ultimately faced no formal punishment.

8. Party leaders are important players in Congress, but they are not all-powerful. In the budget negotiations described in this chapter, the distribution of power within Congress showed a fairly centralized pattern. This was partly the result of the rules governing the budget process and partly a reflection of the need for high-level negotiations to work out differences of great importance to the parties and the two branches. The large differences in the two parties' budgetary policy preferences and each party's fairly great internal cohesiveness encouraged party leaders to be assertive strategists on behalf of their party. But party leaders, it appears, were more than mere agents of their parties. They focused agendas, made good and poor tactical decisions, and shaped their parties' images with the general public in ways that had consequences for the eventual legislative outcome. Some reliance on party leaders is inevitable, given the difficulty of producing collective action among the dozens of members in each of the four congressional parties. Still, as was most obvious in the 1995-1996 budget battle, even the most aggressive leader is constrained by what his or her party colleagues are willing to accept in terms of strategy and policy.

9. Committees play a central role in the legislative process, but their influence is not constant. Budgetary politics since the late 1970s has tended to' push key decisions up to central budget and party leaders and to reduce the independence of committees and their chairs. And yet, it is important to qualify this important consequence of budgetary politics by observing that committees were still responsible for writing the details of most of the legislative provisions of budget packages, even if they were highly constrained by agreements negotiated elsewhere. Even when the top party leaders and administration officials were hammering out the overall shape of the budget deals, most of the language of the budget packages was written by committees, and hundreds of specific policy provisions were negotiated by committee representatives.

The importance of parties, leaders, and committees in congressional policy making will continue to be shaped by the alignment of members' policy preferences, the nature of the issues, and the inherited rules of the game. Perceptions and preferences about budgetary issues are particularly important because of the pervasive effect of the budget on policy initiatives throughout the government. If budget issues begin to lose salience as the deficit fades from memory, then more policy initiatives originating from interest groups and creative members may rejuvenate the committees.

NOTES

[1] On the developments leading up to the enactment of budget reform in 1974, see Allen Schick, *Congress and Money: Budgeting, Spending and Taxing* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1980), pp. 17-81.

[2] For a summary of the 1981 budget experience, see Howard E. Shuman, *Politics and the Budget: The Struggle Between the President and the Congress*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1992), pp. 249-276.

[3] A key provision of the 1995 law was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The provision assigned responsibility to determine whether sequestration was necessary and to order implementation of sequestration to the Comptroller General, the head of the General Accounting Office. Because the GAO is part of the legislative branch, the Court ruled that it could not have executive responsibilities. The 1987 law corrected this flaw by assigning these responsibilities to the OMB.

[4] On the 1989 budget battle, see Lawrence J. Haas, *Running on Empty: Bush, Congress, and the Politics of a Bankrupt Government* (Homewood, Ill.: Business One-Irwin, 1990).

[5] See James A. Thurber and Samantha L. Durst, “The 1990 Budget Enforcement Act: The Decline of Congressional Authority,” in Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce I. Oppenheimer (Eds.), *Congress Reconsidered,* 5th ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1993), pp. 375-397.

[6] John E. Yang, “On the Deficit, It’s Déjà Vu All Over Again,” *Washington Post,* July 18,1993, p. Al.

[7] H. Rept. 103-213.

[8] Kevin Merida, “Bolting Democrats and the President’s Budget,” *Washington Post,* June 19, 1993, p. Al.

[9] George Hager and David S. Cloud, “Democrats Tie Their Fate to Clinton’s Budget Bill,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report,* August 7,1993, pp. 2122-2129.

[10] David S. Cloud, “Big Risk for Margolies-Mezvinsky,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report,* August 7,1993, p. 2125.

[11] *Ibid.* Also see Kevin Merida, “House Democrats Face Budget Fallout,” *Washington Post,* August 7,1993, p. Al.

[12] *Congressional Record,* August 6,1993, pp. S10706-S10707.

[13] Jackie Koszczuk, “GOP Leaders Tell the Troops, It’s Time To Lock Hands,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, September 16, 1995, pp. 2769-2770; George Hager, “Stopgap Bill Allows GOP, Clinton Six More Weeks of Haggling,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, September 30, 1995, pp. 2972-2975; David S.

Cloud, “GOP Moderates Refusing to Get in Line,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, September 30, 1995, pp. 2963-2965.

[14] George Hager and Alissa J. Rubin, “Fight Over Interim Measures Previews a Bigger Battle,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, November 11, 1995, pp. 3439-3444.

[15] George Hager, “Budget Battle Came Sooner Than Either Side Expected,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, November 18, 1995, pp. 3503-3509.

[16] Alissa J. Rubin, “Reality of Tough Job Ahead Dampens Joy Over Deal,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, November 25, 1995, pp. 3597-3599.

[17] George Hager, “A Battered GOP Calls Workers Back to Job,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, January 6, 1996, p. 53.