



# **Consideration of Budgetary Legislation During Presidential Transition Years: A Brief Overview**

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## Summary

When a presidential transition occurs, the incoming President usually submits the budget for the upcoming fiscal year (under current practices) or revises the budget submitted by his predecessor (under past practices). Under either circumstance, the details of the President's budgetary proposals typically are provided to Congress about two months later than would be the case in a non-transition year. Consequently, concerns arise over the potential impact of delayed budget submission on the timetable for budgetary actions taken by the House and Senate.

This report examines the timing of presidential budget submissions during the past five transition years—including submissions by Presidents Jimmy Carter in 1977, Ronald Reagan in 1981, George H.W. Bush in 1989, Bill Clinton in 1993, and George W. Bush in 2001—and the timeliness of House and Senate actions in those years regarding the consideration of budgetary measures.

The budgetary legislation typically considered by the House and Senate during a session may be divided into several categories: budget resolutions, budget reconciliation acts, annual appropriations and other spending acts, and revenue and debt-limit acts.

Congress and the President successfully completed action on key budgetary legislation during each presidential transition year, with many, but not all, actions completed in a timely manner:

- in each instance, the House and Senate reached final agreement on the annual budget resolution, and did so no later than May 21;
- the optional budget reconciliation process was invoked in four of five years, leading to the enactment of four budget reconciliation acts;
- regular, supplemental, and continuing appropriations acts were enacted in each year, although few (or none) of the regular appropriations acts were enacted by October 1 (the first day of the fiscal year) in four instances;
- in each instance, a major revenue bill was enacted (three of the five bills were reconciliation measures); and
- between one and three debt-limit measures were enacted each year, except during the George W. Bush Administration (when no such measures were needed).

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This report examines the timing of presidential budget submissions during the past five transition years—including submissions by Presidents Jimmy Carter in 1977, Ronald Reagan in 1981, George H.W. Bush in 1989, Bill Clinton in 1993, and George W. Bush in 2001—and the timeliness of House and Senate actions in those years regarding the consideration of budgetary measures.

## Background

When a new Congress convenes in January, one of its first orders of business is to receive the annual budget submission of the President for the upcoming fiscal year, which begins later in the session.<sup>1</sup> The President's budget consists of a set of proposals pertaining to spending, revenue, and debt levels. In the course of responding to the President's budget, Congress may accept, reject, or modify the proposals as it sees fit. While much of the spending and revenue in the federal budget is derived automatically each year from existing law, the remainder is provided through the enactment of legislation.

The deadline for submission of the budget has changed several times over the years, as is discussed in more detail below. Currently, the deadline is the first Monday in February.

Following receipt of the President's budget, Congress begins the consideration of the budget resolution and other budgetary legislation. The budget resolution, which takes the form of a concurrent resolution, reflects the agreement of the House and Senate on a budgetary "blueprint" that guides and constrains the subsequent consideration of individual spending, revenue, and debt measures. The consideration of significant spending, revenue, and debt measures by the House and Senate during a session may entail action on dozens of separate measures.

In establishing and revising the deadline for submission of the President's budget, Congress has sought to reconcile two conflicting objectives. First, Congress is motivated to set the deadline as early as possible in order to maximize the time available to it for completing action on the budget resolution and other budgetary legislation before the new fiscal year begins. Although the completion of some budgetary legislation typically carries over into the period beyond the start of the fiscal year, the goal is to enact as much significant budgetary legislation as possible in a timely manner.

Second, Congress also is impelled to afford the President as much time as necessary to finalize his budget submission following the completion of legislative action in the prior session. In recent decades, the House and Senate sometimes have not completed action on significant budgetary

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on federal budgeting, see CRS Report 98-721, *Introduction to the Federal Budget Process*, by Robert Keith. The requirement that the President submit an annual budget is established by the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, as amended (31 U.S.C. 1105(a)).

legislation until December; in some instances, several major bills spanning hundreds of pages have been finalized in the last few days of the year.

Seeking to draw a balance between the two competing motivations, Congress has set the deadline as early as the first week in January and as late as the first week in February. Under current law, the President may submit the budget as early as the first Monday in January, but he must submit it no later than the first Monday in February. Beginning with the FY1992 budget, Presidents have taken advantage of the full amount of time afforded them under law and submitted their budgets on the first Monday in February.

The Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as amended, establishes an annual timetable for congressional action on budgetary legislation, beginning with the adoption of a budget resolution by the House and Senate no later than April 15.<sup>2</sup> In an effort to provide Congress with more time to process budgetary legislation during the session, Section 501 (88 Stat. 321) of the act moved the start of the fiscal year from July 1 to October 1. The change became effective for FY1976, following a three-month transition quarter. The congressional budget process established by the 1974 act became fully effective in 1976 for FY1977, following a “dry run” in the prior year.

## **Presidential Submission of Transition Budgets**

During the period that the congressional budget process under the 1974 act has been in effect, five persons have assumed the presidency – Jimmy Carter in 1977, Ronald Reagan in 1981, George H.W. Bush in 1989, Bill Clinton in 1993, and George W. Bush in 2001. The requirements for budget submission applicable to these Presidents and the record of pertinent actions is discussed briefly below.

### **Submission Requirements for Transition Budgets**

The transition from one presidential administration to another raises special issues regarding the annual budget submission.<sup>3</sup> Key questions include, which President—the outgoing President or the incoming one—is required to submit the budget, and how will the transition affect the timing and form of the submission?

The deadline for submission of the budget, first set in 1921 as “on the first day of each regular session,” has changed several times over the years:

- in 1950, to “during the first 15 days of each regular session”;
- in 1985, to “on or before the first Monday after January 3 of each year (or on or before February 5 in 1986)”;
- in 1990, to “on or after the first Monday in January but not later than the first Monday in February of each year.”

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<sup>2</sup> The act P.L. 93-344 (Titles I-IX). The timetable is set forth in Section 300 (2 U.S.C. 631).

<sup>3</sup> For more information on transition budgets, see CRS Report RS20752, *Submission of the President's Budget in Transition Years*, by Robert Keith.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1933, requires each new Congress to convene on January 3 (unless the date is changed by the enactment of a law) and provides a January 20 beginning date for a new President's four-year term of office. Therefore, under the legal framework for the beginning of a new Congress, the beginning of a new President's term, and the deadline for the submission of the budget, all outgoing Presidents prior to the 1990 change were obligated to submit a budget.<sup>4</sup> All incoming Presidents before 1990, except for Roosevelt, Truman, and Johnson, modified their predecessor's policies by submitting budget revisions within a few months after taking office. The 1990 change in the deadline made it possible for an outgoing President to leave the annual budget submission to his successor.

## Budget Submissions During the Past Five Transitions

During the period covering the past five presidential transitions, the three outgoing Presidents required to submit a budget during this period (Ford, Carter, and Reagan) did so on or before the statutory deadline. Two of the incoming Presidents during this period, Carter and Reagan, submitted budget revisions and one, George H. W. Bush, did not. The FY1978 revisions by President Carter (a 101-page document) were submitted on February 22, 1977, and the FY1982 revisions by President Reagan (an initial 159-page document and a subsequent 435-page document) were submitted on March 10 and April 7, 1981, respectively.

Because President George H. W. Bush chose not to submit a budget for FY1994 (and was not obligated to do so), President Clinton submitted the original budget for FY1994 rather than budget revisions. Similarly, the budget for FY2002 was submitted by the incoming President George W. Bush, rather than by outgoing President Clinton. Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush submitted the original budgets for FY1994 and FY2002 on April 8, 1993 and April 9, 2001, respectively.

The experience with transition budgets during the period that the congressional budget process has been in operation is roughly comparable, in terms of timing, with the experience of earlier years. Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Nixon submitted their revised budget messages to Congress on April 30, March 24, and April 12 of their first year as President, respectively.

Although Presidents Reagan, Clinton, and George W. Bush did not submit detailed budget proposals during their transitions until early April, each of them advised Congress regarding the general contours of their economic and budgetary policies in special messages submitted to Congress in February concurrently with a presentation made to a joint session of Congress:

- on February 18, 1981, President Reagan submitted a document containing an economic plan and initial budget proposals for FY1982, *America's New Beginning: A Program for Economic Recovery*, in conjunction with an address to a joint session of Congress.
- on February 17, 1993, President Clinton submitted to Congress a budgetary document, *A Vision of Change for America*, to accompany his address to a joint

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<sup>4</sup> Additional information on this matter is provided in: CRS Report 93-672, *Budget Submissions of Outgoing Presidents*, by Robert Keith (the report is archived and may be obtained from the author.) The 1990 change was made by Section 13112(c)(1) of the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990 (104 Stat. 1388-608 and 609), which was included in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-508).

session of Congress. The 145-page document outlined the President's economic plan and provided initial budget proposals in key areas.

- on February 28, 2001, President George W. Bush submitted a 207-page budget summary to Congress, *A Blueprint for New Beginnings: A Responsible Budget for America's Priorities*, the day after his address to a joint session of Congress.

Although President George H. W. Bush did not submit a revision of President Reagan's FY1990 budget, he submitted a 193-page message to Congress (*Building a Better America*) in conjunction with a joint address to Congress on February 9, 1989. The message included revised budget proposals.

## Overview of Budgetary Actions by Administration

In a typical year, the unfolding of the federal budget process reflects both instances of cooperation and instances of conflict between the President and Congress (as well as between the House and the Senate, and between factions within each chamber). Cooperation promotes timely and successful action on budgetary legislation, while conflict leads to delay and ultimately may prevent the enactment of such legislation.

In order to fully advance his budgetary agenda, a President must reach agreement with Congress on legislation in several different phases of the budget process. Congress responds to the President's budgetary proposals by adopting an annual budget resolution, and then implements budget resolution policies through the enactment of separate spending, revenue, and debt legislation.

No President can be judged to be successful with respect to his budgetary agenda unless the House and Senate complete action on the requisite legislation, with timely rather than tardy enactment of legislation usually signifying greater success.

**Table 1** summarizes legislative action on the major phases of the budget process during the past five transition years. As **Table 1** shows, Congress and the President successfully completed action on key budgetary legislation during each presidential transition year, with many, but not all, actions completed in a timely manner:

- in each instance, the House and Senate reached final agreement on the annual budget resolution, and did so no later than May 21;
- the optional budget reconciliation process was invoked in four of five years, leading to the enactment of four budget reconciliation acts;
- regular, supplemental, and continuing appropriations acts were enacted in each year, although few (or none) of the regular appropriations acts were enacted by October 1 (the first day of the fiscal year) in four instances;
- in each instance, a major revenue bill was enacted (three of the five bills were reconciliation measures); and
- between one and three debt-limit measures were enacted each year, except during the George W. Bush Administration (when no such measures were needed).

**Table 1. Overview of Timing of Budgetary Actions, by Administration**

<b>President</b>	<b>Transition Budget</b>	<b>Budget Resolution</b>	<b>Budget Reconciliation Act</b>	<b>Annual Appropriations Acts</b>	<b>Selected Revenue Act</b>	<b>Debt-Limit Act(s)</b>
Carter	02-22-1977	May 17	[none]	10 regular appropriations acts enacted by October 1; latest enacted on October 21.  3 continuing resolutions enacted.  4 supplemental appropriations acts enacted in February, March, and May (two acts).	05-23-1977	10-04-1977
Reagan	03-10-1981 and 04-07-1981	May 21	08-13-1981	No regular appropriations acts enacted by October 1; latest enacted on December 29.  3 continuing resolutions enacted.  2 supplemental appropriations acts enacted in June and July.	08-13-1981	02-07-1981 and 09-30-1981 (two acts)
G.H.W. Bush	[none]	May 18	12-19-1989	1 regular appropriations act enacted by October 1; latest enacted on November 21.  3 continuing resolutions enacted.  3 supplemental appropriations acts enacted in April, June, and September.	12-19-1989	08-08-1989 and 11-08-1989
Clinton	04-08-1993	April 1	08-10-1993	2 regular appropriations acts enacted by October 1; latest enacted on November 11.  3 continuing resolutions enacted.  4 supplemental appropriations acts enacted in April, July, August, and September.	08-10-1993	04-06-1993 and 08-10-1993



President	Transition Budget	Budget Resolution	Budget Reconciliation Act	Annual Appropriations Acts	Selected Revenue Act	Debt-Limit Act(s)
G.W. Bush	04-09-2001	May 10	06-07-2001	No regular appropriations acts enacted by October 1; latest enacted on January 10 of following year.  8 continuing resolutions enacted.  2 supplemental appropriations acts enacted in July and September.	06-07-2001	[none]

**Source:** Prepared by the Congressional Research Service.

**Notes:** Dates refer to: (1) date transition budget submitted to Congress; (2) date of final adoption of the budget resolution; or (3) date of enactment of legislation into law. In the case of the September 1993 supplemental appropriations act, supplemental appropriations were provided in a separate title of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act for FY1994.

## Congressional Action on Major Budgetary Legislation

The budgetary legislation typically considered by the House and Senate during a session may be divided into several categories: budget resolutions, budget reconciliation acts, annual appropriations and other spending acts, and revenue and debt-limit acts. Information on the timing of House and Senate action on budgetary measures during each of the past five transition years is provided below by category of legislation.

### Budget Resolutions

The Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-344, as amended) requires that the House and Senate reach agreement each year on a concurrent resolution on the budget.<sup>5</sup> Originally, the act set a deadline of May 15 for completion of action on the budget resolution; in 1985, the deadline was revised to April 15. During the period from 1984 through 1990, actions on several budget resolutions was not completed until August or October. In four instances, the House and Senate were not able to reach agreement on a budget resolution.<sup>6</sup>

As **Table 2** (at the end of the report) shows, the House and Senate reached final agreement on a budget resolution in each of the five transition years. In four years, final agreement was reached in May (no later than May 21). During the first year of the Clinton Administration, the two chambers reached agreement even earlier, on April 1. In this case, the agreement on the budget resolution was reached a week before President Clinton submitted his budget to Congress, but extensive negotiations between Congress and the President ensured that the budget resolution accommodated his major budgetary proposals.

### Budget Reconciliation Acts

The budget reconciliation process is an optional procedure under the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 that operates as an adjunct to the annual budget resolution process. The chief purpose of the reconciliation process is to enhance Congress's ability to change current law in order to bring revenue and spending levels into conformity with the policies of the budget resolution. Accordingly, reconciliation probably is the most potent budget enforcement tool available to Congress for a large portion of the budget.

Reconciliation was first used by the House and Senate in calendar year 1980 for FY1981. As an optional procedure, it has not been used every year. During the period from 1980 to 2008, 19 reconciliation measures were enacted into law and three were vetoed.

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<sup>5</sup> During the early years of the congressional budget process, the House and Senate were required to adopt a second budget resolution in the fall. The practice was abandoned during the 1980s. This report excludes House and Senate action on second budget resolutions in 1977 (for FY1978) and 1981 (for FY1982).

<sup>6</sup> For more information on this topic, see CRS Report RL31443, *The "Deeming Resolution": A Budget Enforcement Tool*, by Robert Keith.

The congressional budget process timetable prescribes June 15 as the deadline for completing action on any required reconciliation legislation, but there is no explicit requirement to that effect. The record of experience with all 22 reconciliation measures passed by the House and Senate since 1980 indicates considerable variation in the time needed to process such measures. The interval from the date the reconciliation instructions take effect (upon final adoption of the budget resolution) until the resultant reconciliation legislation is approved or vetoed by the President ranged from a low of 27 days (for the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990) to a high of 384 days (for the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005). On average, the process was completed in nearly five months, more than twice the amount of time contemplated by the congressional budget process timetable.

With respect to the five transition years, **Table 3** (at the end of the report) shows that reconciliation was used in four of the five instances. Reconciliation was not used during the Carter transition. In three instances, an omnibus budget reconciliation act was enacted into law between the spring and the summer recess. In 1989, an omnibus budget reconciliation was enacted late in the session, on November 22.

## **Annual Appropriations Acts**

Total federal spending encompasses discretionary spending, which is provided in annual appropriations acts under the jurisdiction of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, and mandatory spending, which stems from substantive law under the jurisdiction of the legislative committees of the House and Senate. This section provides information on the three categories of annual appropriations legislation—regular, supplemental, and continuing appropriations acts; information on mandatory spending legislation is excluded.

Under the congressional budget process timetable, the House and Senate begin consideration of the regular appropriations acts following the adoption of the budget resolution with the aim of completing action on them by the start of the fiscal year on October 1. In addition, the two chambers act on at least one supplemental appropriations act, typically before consideration of the regular appropriations acts begins. Finally, the House and Senate usually consider at least one continuing resolution to provide stop-gap funding after the start of the fiscal year until action on all of the regular appropriations acts is completed.

During the period that the congressional budget process has been in effect, the House and Senate have completed action on the regular appropriations acts before the start of the year only four times (for FY1977, FY1989, FY1995, and FY1997); action on unfinished regular appropriations acts usually is completed by the end of the calendar year, but sometimes carries over into the following session. Accordingly, multiple continuing resolutions are enacted in a typical year.

**Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6** (at the end of the report) provide information regarding congressional action on supplemental, regular, and continuing appropriations acts, respectively.

**Table 4** shows that a total of 15 supplemental appropriations acts were enacted during the five transition years, ranging from two to four such acts each year. All but four of the acts were enacted between February and July; one was enacted in August and three were enacted in September.

**Table 5** shows that while all thirteen of the regular appropriations bills were enacted during the transition years of the Carter, George H.W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush administrations,

and nine of the thirteen were enacted during the transition year of the Reagan administration, not all of this was accomplished in the prescribed timeframe. During the Carter administration, 10 appropriations acts were enacted by October 1, but during the other administrations, the number enacted by this date were none (Reagan, G.W. Bush), one (G.H.W. Bush), or two (Clinton). While the appropriations process was completed under most administrations by the end of the calendar year, the process extended into January under the G.W. Bush administration.

**Table 6** shows that continuing appropriations acts were used in transition years during all five administrations. Under the Carter, Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, and Clinton administrations, three continuing resolutions were enacted each year, while under the G.W. Bush administration eight continuing resolutions were enacted. In the case of the G.W. Bush administration, the final continuing resolution, enacted December 20, provided funding into January, when the last of his regular appropriations acts were completed.

## Revenue Acts

As required by the Constitution, legislation affecting revenues originates in the House of Representatives, but the Senate has latitude to amend any revenue bills received from the House. Most laws that establish revenue sources are permanent and continue each year without legislative action, but in most years, Presidents propose changes in revenue law to alter tax rates, modify the distribution of the tax burden, or make other changes in revenue policy.

Revenue acts can also be initiated through the reconciliation process provided for in the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. The act provides for the adoption of a budget resolution (discussed above), which may contain reconciliation directives instructing the relevant congressional committees to report changes to existing revenue legislation to meet the recommended levels of revenues. The reconciliation process was used to enact revenue legislation under the G.H.W. Bush, Clinton, and G.W. Bush administrations.

The timing of action on major revenue legislation may vary considerably from one measure to the next. Some revenue measures may be enacted after only a few months of consideration, while the enactment of other revenue measures may not occur until well into the following year. This pattern also holds true for revenue measures considered under the reconciliation process.

**Table 7** illustrates that a major revenue measure was enacted into law during the transition year of each of the five administrations. Three of these revenue acts, under G.H.W. Bush, Clinton, and G.W. Bush, were reconciliation measures. Congressional action was fairly timely in four instances (with enactment occurring between May and August), but the 1989 legislation (under President G.H.W. Bush) was not enacted until November 22.

## Debt-Limit Acts

Almost all borrowing by the federal government is conducted by the Treasury Department, within the restrictions established by a single, statutory limit on the total amount of debt that may be outstanding at any time. Most adjustments to the debt limit have been increases, but sometimes the change has been a reduction.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion of this matter, see CRS Report RS21519, *Legislative Procedures for Adjusting the Public* (continued...)

The annual budget resolution includes recommended levels of the public debt limit for each fiscal year covered by the resolution. Because a budget resolution does not become law, Congress and the President must enact legislation in order to implement budget resolution policies. The House and Senate may develop and consider legislation adjusting the debt limit in any one of three ways: (1) under regular legislative procedures in both chambers, either as freestanding legislation or as a part of a measure dealing with other topics; (2) pursuant to House Rule XXVII (the so-called Gephardt rule); or (3) as part of the budget reconciliation process provided for under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. During the period from 1940 to the present, Congress and the President have enacted a total of 88 measures adjusting the public debt limit—70 under regular legislative procedures in both chambers, 14 under the Gephardt rule, and 4 under reconciliation procedures.

The timing of legislative action on measures adjusting the debt limit is not as predictable as the timing of action on other types of budgetary legislation. Legislative action can occur at any point in the session as the need to adjust the debt limit requires.

**Table 8** shows that between one and three debt limit measures were enacted during each transition year, except during the G.W. Bush administration. All three methods of adjusting the debt limit were employed, but only one of the measures (in 1993 during the Clinton transition year) was a reconciliation act.

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(...continued)

*Debt Limit: A Brief Overview*, by Bill Heniff Jr.

**Table 2. Dates of House and Senate Action on First Budget Resolutions**

Calendar Years 1977, 1981, 1989, 1993, and 2001

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
<b>President Jimmy Carter</b>					
First Budget Resolution for FY1978 (S.Con.Res. 19)	1977	May 5	May 4	May 17	May 13
<b>President Ronald Reagan</b>					
First Budget Resolution for FY1982 (H.Con.Res. 115)	1981	May 7	May 12	May 20	May 21
<b>President George H.W. Bush</b>					
Budget Resolution for FY1990 (H.Con.Res. 106)	1989	May 4	May 4	May 17	May 18
<b>President Bill Clinton</b>					
Budget Resolution for FY1994 (H.Con.Res. 64)	1993	March 18	March 25	March 31	April 1
<b>President George W. Bush</b>					
Budget Resolution for FY2002 (H.Con.Res. 83)	2001	March 28	April 6	May 9	May 10

**Source:** CRS Report RL30297, *Congressional Budget Resolutions: Selected Statistics and Information Guide*, by Bill Heniff Jr. and Justin Murray.

**Notes:** During the early years of the congressional budget process, the House and Senate were required to adopt a second budget resolution in the fall. The practice was abandoned during the 1980s. This table excludes House and Senate action on second budget resolutions in 1977 (for FY1978) and 1981 (for FY1982). In some instances, dates of initial Senate passage refer to action on a companion measure.

**Table 3. Dates of House and Senate Action on Budget Reconciliation Acts**

Calendar Years 1977, 1981, 1989, 1993, and 2001

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
<b>President Jimmy Carter</b>					
[none]	1977	—	—	—	—
<b>President Ronald Reagan</b>					
Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-35; August 13, 1981)	1981	June 26	June 25	July 31	July 31
<b>President George H.W. Bush</b>					
Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-239; December 19, 1989)	1989	October 5	October 13	November 22	November 22
<b>President Bill Clinton</b>					
Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-66; August 10, 1993)	1993	May 27	June 25	August 5	August 6
<b>President George W. Bush</b>					
Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-16; June 7, 2001)	2001	May 16	May 23	May 26	May 26

**Source:** CRS Report RL33030, *The Budget Reconciliation Process: House and Senate Procedures*, by Robert Keith and Bill Heniff Jr.

**Notes:** The 1989, 1993, and 2001 reconciliation acts included revenue changes and also are included in . In addition, the 1993 reconciliation act included an increase in the debt limit and also is included in **Table 8**. In some instances, dates of initial Senate passage refer to action on a companion measure.

**Table 4. Dates of House and Senate Action on Supplemental Appropriations Acts**

Calendar Years 1977, 1981, 1989, 1993, and 2001

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
<b>President Jimmy Carter</b>					
Urgent Power Supplemental, FY1977 (P.L. 95-3; February 16, 1977)	1977	February 7	February 7	—	—
Urgent Disaster Supplemental, FY1977 (P.L. 95-13; March 21, 1977)	1977	March 3	March 11	—	—
Supplemental, FY1977 (P.L. 95-26; May 4, 1977)	1977	March 16	April 1	April 21	April 22
Economic Stimulus Appropriations, FY1977 (P.L. 95-29; May 13, 1977)	1977	March 15	May 2	May 4	May 5
<b>President Ronald Reagan</b>					
Supplemental Appropriations and Rescission Act, FY1981 (P.L. 97-12; June 5, 1981)	1981	May 13	May 21	June 4	June 4
Urgent Supplemental, FY1981 (P.L. 97-26; July 29, 1981)	1981	July 23	July 23	—	—
<b>President George H.W. Bush</b>					
Act to Implement the Bipartisan Accord on Central America (P.L. 101-14; April 18, 1989)	1989	April 13	April 13	—	—
Dire Emergency Supplemental, FY1989 (P.L. 101-45; June 30, 1989)	1989	May 18	May 18	—	—
Continuing Appropriations, FY1990, and Hurricane Hugo Relief, FY1989 (P.L. 101-100; September 29, 1989)	1989	September 26	September 28	—	—



Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
<b>President Bill Clinton</b>					
Emergency Supplemental, FY1994 (P.L. 103-24; April 23, 1993)	1993	March 19	April 21	—	—
Supplemental, FY1993 (P.L. 103-50; July 2, 1993)	1993	May 26	June 22	July 1	July 1
Emergency Supplemental, FY1993 (P.L. 103-75; August 12, 1993)	1993	July 27	August 4	—	—
Foreign Operations, FY1994 (Title VI, Supplemental, FY1993) (P.L. 103-87; September 30, 1993)	1993	June 17	September 23	September 29	September 30
<b>President George W. Bush</b>					
Supplemental, FY2001 (P.L. 107-20; July 24, 2001)	2001	June 20	July 10	July 20	July 20
Emergency Supplemental, FY2001 (P.L. 107-38; September 18, 2001)	2001	September 14	September 14	—	—

**Source:** Legislative Information System and Congressional Budget Office, *Supplemental Appropriations in the 1970s* (July 1981), *Supplemental Appropriations in the 1980s* (February 1990), *Supplemental Appropriations in the 1990s* (March 2001), and *Supplemental Appropriations from 2000 to 2009* (October 2008).

**Notes:** In some instances, dates of initial Senate passage refer to action on a companion measure. In instances where no conference action occurred, either one chamber passed the measure from the other chamber without amendment, or the two chambers resolved their differences by means of an “exchange of amendments” procedure rather than a conference.

**Table 5. Dates of House and Senate Action on Regular Appropriations Acts**

Calendar Years 1977, 1981, 1989, 1993, and 2001

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
<b>President Jimmy Carter</b>					
Agriculture, FY1978 (P.L. 95-97; August 12, 1977)	1977	June 21	June 29	July 27	July 29
Defense, FY1978 (P.L. 95-111; September 21, 1977)	1977	June 30	July 19	September 8	September 9
District of Columbia, FY1978 (P.L. 95-288; June 5, 1978)	1977	September 16	October 4	May 16 (1978)	May 23 (1978)
Foreign Assistance, FY1978 (P.L. 95-148; October 31, 1977)	1977	June 23	August 5	October 18	October 19
Interior, FY1978 (P.L. 95-74; July 26, 1977)	1977	June 9	June 17	July 12	July 13
HUD, FY1978 (P.L. 95-119; October 4, 1977)	1977	June 15	June 24	July 19	September 23
Labor, HEW, FY1978 (H.R. 7555)	1977	June 17	June 29	— <sup>a</sup>	November 3
Legislative Branch (P.L. 95-94; August 5, 1977)	1977	June 29	July 18	July 26	July 26
Military Construction, FY1978 (P.L. 95-101; August 15, 1977)	1977	June 21	June 29	August 5	August 5
Public Works (P.L. 95-96; August 7, 1977)	1977	June 14	July 13	July 25	July 25
State, Justice (P.L. 95-86; August 2, 1977)	1977	June 13	June 24	July 18	July 19
Transportation (P.L. 95-85; August 2, 1977)	1977	June 8	June 23	July 18	July 20
Treasury, Postal (P.L. 95-81; July 31, 1977)	1977	June 8	June 20	July 14	July 14
<b>President Ronald Reagan</b>					
Agriculture, FY1982 (P.L. 97-103; December 23, 1981)	1981	July 27	October 30	December 15	December 15
Commerce, Justice, State, FY1982 (H.R. 4169)	1981	September 9	— <sup>b</sup>	— <sup>b</sup>	— <sup>b</sup>

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Date of Initial House Passage</b>	<b>Date of Initial Senate Passage</b>	<b>Date House Agreed to Conference Report</b>	<b>Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report</b>
Defense, FY1982 (P.L. 97-114; December 29, 1981)	1981	November 18	December 4	December 15	December 15
District of Columbia, FY1982 (P.L. 97-91; December 4, 1981)	1981	September 22	October 30	November 18	November 19
Energy and Water, FY1982 (P.L. 97-88; December 4, 1981)	1981	July 24	November 5	November 20	November 21
Foreign Assistance, FY1982 (P.L. 97-121; December 29, 1981)	1981	December 11	December 11	December 16	December 16
HUD, FY1982 (P.L. 97-101; December 23, 1981)	1981	July 21	July 30	September 15	November 21
Interior, FY1982 (P.L. 97-100; December 23, 1981)	1981	July 22	October 27	November 12	December 10
Labor, Health, Education, FY1982 (H.R. 4560)	1981	October 6	— <sup>b</sup>	— <sup>b</sup>	— <sup>b</sup>
Legislative Branch, FY1982 (H.R. 4120)	1981	[not considered by either chamber]			
Military Construction, FY1982 (P.L. 97-106; December 23, 1981)	1981	September 16	December 4	December 15	December 15
Transportation, FY1982 (P.L. 97-102; December 23, 1981)	1981	September 10	November 3	December 14	December 14
Treasury, FY1982 (H.R. 4121)	1981	July 30	— <sup>c</sup>	— <sup>c</sup>	— <sup>c</sup>
<b>President George H.W. Bush</b>					
Agriculture, FY1990 (P.L. 101-161; November 21, 1989)	1989	July 18	July 27	November 16	November 16
Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary, FY1990 (P.L. 101-162; November 21, 1989)	1989	August 1	September 29	November 7 (second report)	November 8 (second report)
Defense, FY1990 (P.L. 101-165; November 21, 1989)	1989	August 4	September 29	November 15	November 17
District of Columbia, FY1990 (P.L. 101-168; November 21, 1989)	1989	August 3	September 14	— <sup>d</sup>	— <sup>d</sup>

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Date of Initial House Passage</b>	<b>Date of Initial Senate Passage</b>	<b>Date House Agreed to Conference Report</b>	<b>Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report</b>
Energy and Water, FY1990 (P.L. 101-101; September 29, 1989)	1989	June 28	July 27	September 12	September 14
Foreign Operations, FY1990 (P.L. 101-167; November 21, 1989)	1989	July 21	September 26	— <sup>d</sup>	— <sup>d</sup>
Interior, FY1990 (P.L. 101-121; October 23, 1989)	1989	July 12	July 26	October 3	October 7
Labor, HHS, Education, FY1990 (P.L. 101-166; November 21, 1989)	1989	August 2	September 26	— <sup>d</sup>	— <sup>d</sup>
Legislative Branch, FY1990 (P.L. 101-163; November 21, 1989)	1989	July 31	September 7	September 28	November 1
Military Construction, FY1990 (P.L. 101-148; November 10, 1989)	1989	July 31	September 15	October 26	October 27
Transportation, FY1990 (P.L. 101-164; November 21, 1989)	1989	August 3	September 27	October 31	November 9
Treasury, Postal, FY1990 (P.L. 101-136; November 3, 1989)	1989	July 28	August 4	October 17	October 18
VA, HUD, FY1990 (P.L. 101-144; November 9, 1989)	1989	July 20	September 28	October 24	October 27
<b>President Bill Clinton</b>					
Agriculture, FY1994 (P.L. 103-111; October 21, 1993)	1993	June 29	July 27	August 6	September 23
Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary, FY1994 (P.L. 103-121; October 27, 1993)	1993	July 20	July 29	October 19	October 21
Defense, FY1994 (P.L. 103-139; November 11, 1993)	1993	September 30	October 21	November 10	November 10
District of Columbia, FY1994 (P.L. 103-127; October 29, 1993)	1993	June 30	July 27	October 27	October 27
Energy and Water, FY1994 (P.L. 103-126; October 28, 1993)	1993	June 24	September 30	October 26	October 27

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Date of Initial House Passage</b>	<b>Date of Initial Senate Passage</b>	<b>Date House Agreed to Conference Report</b>	<b>Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report</b>
Foreign Operations, FY1994 (P.L. 103-87; September 30, 1993)	1993	June 17	September 23	September 29	September 30
Interior, FY1994 (P.L. 103-138; November 11, 1993)	1993	July 15	September 15	October 20	November 9
Labor, HHS, Education, FY1994 (P.L. 103-112; October 21, 1993)	1993	June 30	September 29	October 7	October 18
Legislative Branch, FY1994 (P.L. 103-69; August 11, 1993)	1993	June 10	July 23	August 6	August 6
Military Construction, FY1994 (P.L. 103-110; October 21, 1993)	1993	June 23	September 30	October 13	October 19
Transportation, FY1994 (P.L. 103-122; October 27, 1993)	1993	September 23	October 6	October 21	October 21
Treasury, Postal, FY1994 (P.L. 103-123; October 28, 1993)	1993	June 22	August 3	September 29	October 26
VA, HUD, FY1994 (P.L. 103-124; October 28, 1993)	1993	June 29	September 22	October 19	October 21
<b>President George W. Bush</b>					
Agriculture, FY2002 (P.L. 107-76; November 28, 2001)	2001	July 11	October 25	November 13	November 15
Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary, FY2002 (P.L. 107-77; November 28, 2001)	2001	July 18	September 13	November 14	November 15
Defense, FY2002 (P.L. 107-117; January 10, 2002)	2001	November 28	December 7	December 20	December 20
District of Columbia, FY2002 (P.L. 107-96; December 21, 2001)	2001	September 25	November 7	December 6	December 7
Energy and Water, FY2002 (P.L. 107-66; November 12, 2001)	2001	June 28	July 19	November 1	November 1
Foreign Operations, FY2002 (P.L. 107-115; January 10, 2002)	2001	July 24	October 24	December 19	December 20

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Date of Initial House Passage</b>	<b>Date of Initial Senate Passage</b>	<b>Date House Agreed to Conference Report</b>	<b>Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report</b>
Interior, FY2002 (P.L. 107-63; November 5, 2001)	2001	June 21	July 12	October 17	October 17
Labor, HHS, Education, FY2002 (P.L. 107-116; January 10, 2002)	2001	October 11	November 6	December 19	December 20
Legislative Branch, FY2002 (P.L. 107-68; November 12, 2001)	2001	July 31	July 19	November 1	November 1
Military Construction, FY2002 (P.L. 107-64; November 5, 2001)	2001	September 21	September 26	October 17	October 18
Transportation, FY2002 (P.L. 107-87; December 18, 2001)	2001	June 26	August 1	November 30	December 4
Treasury, Postal, FY2002 (P.L. 107-67; November 12, 2001)	2001	July 25	September 19	October 31	November 1
VA, HUD, FY2002 (P.L. 107-73; November 26, 2001)	2001	July 31	August 2	November 8	November 8

**Source:** Legislative Information System and Calendars of the House of Representatives.

**Notes:** In some instances, dates of initial Senate passage refer to action on a companion measure. In instances where no conference action occurred, either one chamber passed the measure from the other chamber without amendment, or the two chambers resolved their differences by means of an “exchange of amendments” procedure rather than a conference.

- a. The Senate agreed to a third conference report on the measure on November 3; the House did not agree to the conference report and further actions to resolve the differences between the two chambers on the bill were not successful.
- b. The Senate did not consider the bill and no further action occurred.
- c. The Senate considered, but did not pass, the bill and no further action occurred.
- d. Following unsuccessful action on initial version(s) of the act, a subsequent measure was passed in identical form by the two chambers, obviating the need for a conference.

**Table 6. Dates of House and Senate Action on Continuing Appropriations Acts**

Calendar Years 1977, 1981, 1989, 1993, and 2001

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
<b>President Jimmy Carter</b>					
Continuing Appropriations for FY1978 (P.L. 95-130; October 13, 1977)	1977	October 13	October 13	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY1978 (P.L. 95-165; November 9, 1977)	1977	November 3	November 4	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY1978 (P.L. 95-205; December 9, 1977)	1977	December 6	December 6	—	—
<b>President Ronald Reagan</b>					
Continuing Appropriations for FY1982 (P.L. 97-51; October 1, 1981)	1981	September 16	September 25	September 30	September 30
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY1982 (P.L. 97-85; November 23, 1981)	1981	November 23	November 23	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY1982 (P.L. 97-92; December 15, 1981)	1981	December 10	December 11	—	—
<b>President George H.W. Bush</b>					
Continuing Appropriations for FY1990 (P.L. 101-100; September 29, 1989)	1989	September 26	September 28	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY1990 (P.L. 101-130; October 26, 1989)	1989	October 24	October 25	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY1990 (P.L. 101-154; November 15, 1989)	1989	November 15	November 15	—	—
<b>President Bill Clinton</b>					
Continuing Appropriations for FY1994 (P.L. 103-88; September 30, 1993)	1993	September 29	September 29	—	—

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY1994 (P.L. 103-113; October 21, 1993)	1993	October 21	October 21	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY1994 (P.L. 103-128; October 29, 1993)	1993	October 28	October 28	—	—
<b>President George W. Bush</b>					
Continuing Appropriations for FY2002 (P.L. 107-44; September 28, 2001)	2001	September 24	September 25	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY2002 (P.L. 107-48; October 12, 2001)	2001	October 11	October 12	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY2002 (P.L. 107-53; October 22, 2001)	2001	October 17	October 17	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY2002 (P.L. 107-58; October 31, 2001)	2001	October 25	October 25	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY2002 (P.L. 107-70; November 17, 2001)	2001	November 15	November 15	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY2002 (P.L. 107-79; December 7, 2001)	2001	December 5	December 5	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY2002 (P.L. 107-83; December 15, 2001)	2001	December 13	December 14	—	—
Further Continuing Appropriations for FY2002 (P.L. 107-97; December 21, 2001)	2001	December 20	December 20	—	—

**Source:** Legislative Information System and CRS Report RL32614, *Duration of Continuing Resolutions in Recent Years*, by Robert Keith.

**Notes:** Under President Reagan, a fourth continuing appropriations act for FY1982 was enacted in the following calendar year (P.L. 97-161; March 31, 1982). In instances where no conference action occurred, either one chamber passed the measure from the other chamber without amendment, or the two chambers resolved their differences by means of an “exchange of amendments” procedure rather than a conference.



**Table 7. Dates of House and Senate Action on Selected Revenue Acts**

Calendar Years 1977, 1981, 1989, 1993, and 2001

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
<b>President Jimmy Carter</b>					
Tax Reduction and Simplification Act of 1977 (P.L. 95-30; May 23, 1977)	1977	March 8	April 29	May 16	May 16
<b>President Ronald Reagan</b>					
Economic Recovery Act of 1981 (P.L. 97-34; August 13, 1981)	1981	July 29	July 31	August 4	August 3
<b>President George H.W. Bush</b>					
Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 (P.L. 101-239; December 19, 1989)	1989	October 5	October 13	November 22	November 22
<b>President Bill Clinton</b>					
Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-66; August 10, 1993)	1993	May 27	June 25	August 5	August 6
<b>President George W. Bush</b>					
Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-16; June 7, 2001)	2001	May 16	May 23	May 26	May 26

**Sources:** Legislative Information System; Department of the Treasury, Office of Tax Analysis, *Revenue Effects of Major Tax Bills*, by Jerry Tempalski, OTA Working Paper 81, revised September 2006, Table 2, pp. 16-17; and CRS Report RL33030, *The Budget Reconciliation Process: House and Senate Procedures*, by Robert Keith and Bill Heniff Jr.

**Notes:** The 1989, 1993, and 2001 revenue acts also are reconciliation acts and are included in **Table 3**.

**Table 8. Dates of House and Senate Action on Debt-Limit Acts**

Calendar Years 1977, 1981, 1989, 1993, and 2001

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
<b>President Jimmy Carter</b>					
An Act to Increase the Temporary Debt Limit (P.L. 95-120; October 4, 1977)	1977	September 28	September 30	—	—
<b>President Ronald Reagan</b>					
A Bill to Provide for a Temporary Increase in the Public Debt Limit (P.L. 97-2; February 7, 1981)	1981	February 5	February 6	—	—
A Bill to Provide for a Temporary Increase in the Public Debt Limit (P.L. 97-48; September 30, 1981)	1981	May 21	September 29	—	—
A Joint Resolution to Provide for a Temporary Increase in the Public Debt Limit (P.L. 97-49; September 30, 1981)	1981	May 21	September 29	—	—
<b>President George H.W. Bush</b>					
To Increase the Statutory Limit on the Public Debt (P.L. 101-72; August 7, 1989)	1989	August 1	August 4	—	—
Increasing the Statutory Limit on the Public Debt (P.L. 101-140; November 8, 1989)	1989	May 17	November 7	—	—
<b>President Bill Clinton</b>					
To Provide for a Temporary Increase in the Public Debt Limit (P.L. 103-12; April 6, 1993)	1993	April 2	April 5	—	—
Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-66, Sec. 13111; August 10, 1993) <sup>a</sup>	1993	May 27	June 25	August 5	August 6

Measure	Calendar Year	Date of Initial House Passage	Date of Initial Senate Passage	Date House Agreed to Conference Report	Date Senate Agreed to Conference Report
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**President George W. Bush**

[none]	2001	—	—	—	—
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**Sources:** Legislative Information System and Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2009, Historical Tables*, February 4, 2008, Table 7-3, pp. 130-133.

**Notes:** In instances where no conference action occurred, either one chamber passed the measure from the other chamber without amendment, or the two chambers resolved their differences by means of an “exchange of amendments” procedure rather than a conference

- a. The second debt-limit increase in 1993 was contained in a reconciliation act that also is included in **Table 3**.

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