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Legislative Branch Appropriations: Frequently Asked Questions

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SUMMARY

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October 27, 2026

Ida A. Brudnick
Specialist on the Congress

Legislative Branch Appropriations: Frequently Asked Questions

This report responds to frequently asked questions about legislative branch appropriations. Frequently asked questions include the items that are funded within this bill; development, presentation, and consideration of the legislative branch budget requests; the legislative branch budget in historical perspective; and recent actions.

The FY2027 *Budget Appendix* volume was submitted on April 3, 2026 ($8.507 billion, or +17.2% from the total FY2026 enacted level). The House Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee held hearings on the FY2027 requests in March 2026, with the Senate Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee following in April and May.

On April 30, 2026, the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch, held a markup of the FY2027 bill and ordered it reported (5-4). On May 20, 2026, the full House Committee on Appropriations marked up the bill and ordered it reported by roll call vote (Roll no. 8, 34-28) (H.R. 9010, H.Rept. 119-666). The House-reported bill would provide $5.442 billion (Title I only), not including Senate items, a $93.2 million decrease (-1.7%) from the comparable FY2026 enacted level.

A regular appropriations bill was not enacted by the start of the fiscal year. Instead, a continuing appropriations resolution (CR), P.L. 119-103, was enacted on September 2, 2026. The CR provides funding from October 1, 2026, through December 11, 2026—a 72-day period covering roughly the first 10 weeks of FY2027. The CR contains two anomalies for the legislative branch: (1) Section 144 prohibits any adjustment in pay for Members of Congress during the period covered by the act, and (2) Section 145 provides gratuity payments to the beneficiaries of two deceased Members of Congress (one from the House and one from the Senate).

Previously, at the beginning of FY2026, neither the regular appropriations bill nor a CR had been enacted, and a partial shutdown began on October 1, 2025. The lapse in appropriations ended when P.L. 119-37 was enacted on November 12, 2025. Total legislative branch funding in P.L. 119-37, including Division C (the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 2026: $7.125 billion, +5.6% compared to the comparable FY2025 level), and Division A (the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2026: $522,000 for “Payment to Widows and Heirs of Deceased Members of Congress” and $30.0 million for “United States Capitol Police Mutual Aid Reimbursements”) is $7.258 billion (+7.6% including both divisions).

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Frequently Asked Questions

In addition to the Senate and House of Representatives, what is funded by the legislative branch appropriations bill?

In addition to the Senate and House of Representatives, the legislative branch bill typically funds Joint Items, including the Joint Economic Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation, Office of the Attending Physician, Office of Congressional Accessibility Services, and in some years, the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies; Capitol Police; Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR, formerly the Office of Compliance); Congressional Budget Office (CBO); Architect of the Capitol (AOC); Library of Congress (LOC), including the Congressional Research Service (CRS); Government Publishing Office (GPO); Government Accountability Office (GAO); the Congressional Office for International Leadership (formerly the Open World Leadership Center); and a payment to the John C. Stennis Center for Public Service Training and Development.

Why is the legislative branch budget request included in the President's budget request? Does the President play any role in its development?

The President has no formal role in the development of the legislative branch budget request, even though it is included in the President's annual budget request documents.

By long-standing law and practice, the legislative branch request and any supplemental requests are submitted to the President and included in the budget without change.[1]

While the executive branch budget submissions generally involve interaction between an agency and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the legislative branch requests do not. The executive branch does not review or maintain documentation in support of the legislative branch requests.[2]

What percentage of discretionary budget authority historically goes to the legislative branch?

Discretionary budget authority is provided and controlled by the annual appropriations acts.

[1] Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. §1105, "Estimated expenditures and proposed appropriations for the legislative branch and the judicial branch to be included in each budget ... shall be submitted to the President ... and included in the budget by the President without change." Division C of the FY2012 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 112-74) added language to 31 U.S.C. §1107 relating to budget amendments, stating: "The President shall transmit promptly to Congress without change, proposed deficiency and supplemental appropriations submitted to the President by the legislative branch and the judicial branch."

[2] OMB Circular A-11, Part 2, "Preparation and Submission of Budget Estimates," Section 25, provides the following information for agencies and entities, including the legislative branch, "not subject to Executive Branch review by law or custom. That means that the requirements for submitting materials in support of your budget request do not apply to you. However, you do need to submit the information required for inclusion in the budget database and documents, which OMB incorporates without revision."

Since FY1976, the legislative branch as a proportion of total discretionary budget authority has averaged approximately 0.40%.[3] The maximum level, not including the transition quarter,[4] was in FY1995 (0.48%), and the minimum was in FY2020 (0.28%).

When including only FY2006-FY2026, the average is lower—0.36% of total discretionary budget authority in this period.

What percentage of total budget authority (mandatory and discretionary) historically goes to the legislative branch?

Total budget authority includes both discretionary budget authority controlled by the annual appropriations acts and mandatory budget authority controlled by previous laws, including entitlements.

Since FY1976, the legislative branch as a proportion of total budget authority has averaged 0.15%. The maximum level, 0.23%, was in FY1977, and the minimum, 0.07%, was in FY2020.[5]

When including only FY2006-FY2026, the average is lower—0.12% of total budget authority in this period.

How is funding divided across the legislative branch?

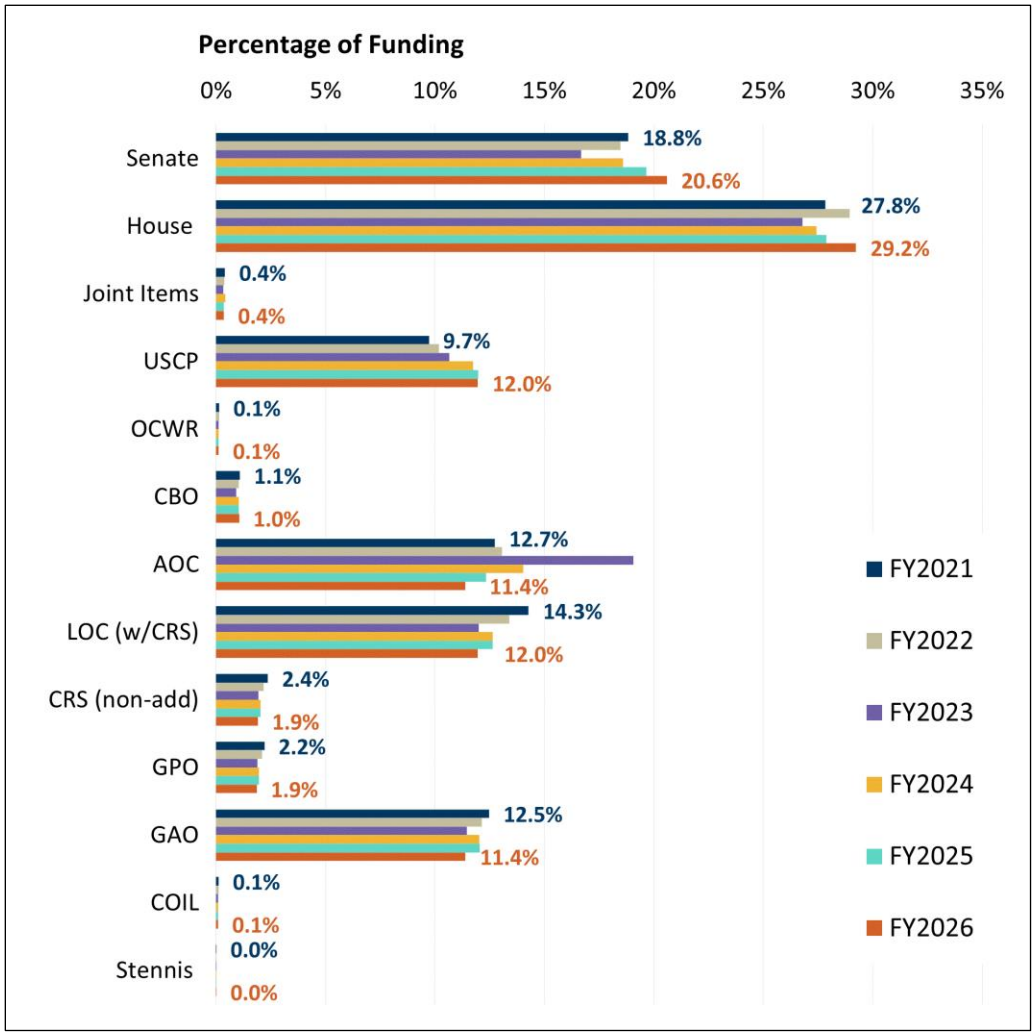
Figure 1 shows the distribution of funding across the legislative branch since FY2021.

[3] Calculations by CRS with data from Office of Management and Budget (OMB), "Table 5.4—Discretionary Budget Authority by Agency: 1976-2031," in Historical Tables, Budget of the United States Government, FY2027, https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-resources/budget/historical-tables/. The calculations have some limitations, since the OMB data do not completely align with items funded in the annual and supplemental legislative branch appropriations acts. The differences may be partially traced to the definition of "legislative branch" in the OMB Public Budget Database user's guide. Some entities regularly included with the legislative branch in many OMB budget documents, like the U.S. Tax Court and some Legislative Branch Boards and Commissions, are not funded through the annual legislative branch appropriations acts. Consequently, an examination of the discretionary budget authority listed in the Historical Tables reveals some differences with the reported total budget authority provided in the annual legislative branch appropriations acts. The difference in legislative branch budget authority resulting from the different definitions of the legislative branch in the OMB budget documents and in the appropriations acts, however, does not represent a significant difference in the proportion of total discretionary budget authority.

[4] "Prior to 1977, the fiscal year began on July 1 and ended on June 30 ... Fiscal year 1976 ended on June 30, 1976, and fiscal year 1977 began on October 1, 1976. The period July 1, 1976, to September 30, 1976, is called the 'transition quarter' or TQ." (Office of Management and Budget, Budget Analysis Branch, *Public Budget Database User's Guide*, *Budget of the United States Government*, FY2022, May 2021, p. 2.)

[5] Calculations by CRS with data from Office of Management and Budget (OMB), "Table 5.2—Budget Authority by Agency: 1976–2031," in Historical Tables, *Budget of the United States Government*, FY2027, at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-resources/budget/historical-tables/.

Figure 1. Distribution of Legislative Branch Funding Since FY2021



Source: CRS analysis of legislative branch appropriations acts and related budget documents.

Note: This figure does not include permanent budget authorities, offsetting collections, or authority to spend receipts. See notes in **Table 2** regarding supplemental appropriations.

Why do the initial committee-reported versions of the annual bill not fund the other chamber?

The House and Senate both consider funding levels for the legislative branch agencies and joint entities. By long-standing tradition, however, the House bill does not propose funding levels for Senate items, including the account that funds the Senate and the Senate office buildings account within the Architect of the Capitol.[6] Similarly, the Senate does not comment on House items, including the account that funds the House and the House office buildings account within the Architect of the Capitol. The House, Senate, and conference reports on legislative branch appropriations bills regularly contain language illustrating the deference of each chamber to the

[6] The House and Senate office building accounts are 2 of the 10 accounts that fund operations of the Architect. The other accounts fund capital construction and operations, Capitol building, Capitol grounds, Capitol Power Plant, Library buildings and grounds, Capitol Police buildings and grounds, Capitol Visitor Center, and Botanic Garden.

internal practices of the other.[7] If comparing the House and Senate bill totals, or the total provided to the Architect of the Capitol at different stages of consideration, adjustments may be necessary to address any omissions due to this practice.

How has funding for the legislative branch changed in recent years in current and constant (inflation-adjusted) dollars?

Table 1 provides information on the enacted funding levels provided for the legislative branch from FY2010 to FY2026.

What funding has been provided in recent years for the Senate, House of Representatives, and legislative branch agencies?

Table 2 provides information on funding levels for the Senate, House of Representatives, and legislative branch agencies in recent years as well as the requested and House-reported levels for FY2027.

By law, the President includes the legislative branch request in the annual budget submission without change.

[7] For example, the FY1996 conference report (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, *FY1996 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill*, H.Rept. 104-212, report to accompany H.R. 1854, p. 9) states

> Inasmuch as the amendment relates solely to the Senate and in accord with long practice under which each body concurs without intervention, the managers on the part of the House, at the request of the managers on the part of the Senate, have receded to the Senate amendment, as amended.

Similarly, the FY2010 conference report (U.S. Congress, conference committee, *FY2010 Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill*, H.Rept. 111-265, report to accompany H.R. 2918, p. 33) states

> Inasmuch as these items relate solely to the House, and in accord with long practice under which each body determines its own housekeeping requirements and the other concurs without intervention, the managers on the part of the Senate, at the request of the managers on the part of the House, have receded to the amendment of the House as amended.

Table 1. Legislative Branch Funding, FY2010-FY2026: Current and Constant Dollars

(in billions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Curr.	4.669 [a]	4.543 [b]	4.307	4.061 [c]	4.259	4.300	4.363	4.440	4.700 [d]	4.846 [e]	5.049 [f]	5.304 [g]	5.924	6.899 [h]	6.749	6.740 [i]	7.258 [j]
Const.	6.691	6.371	5.919	5.487	5.670	5.701	5.746	5.751	5.964	6.050	6.211	6.327	6.642	7.407	7.061	6.896	7.258

Source: CRS analysis of legislative branch appropriations acts and related budget documents.

Notes: These figures exclude permanent budget authorities, including funding for Member pay, that are not included in the annual legislative branch appropriations bill. Constant dollars calculated using the "Total Non-Defense" deflator in *Table 10.1—Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940-2031* in the President's FY2027 budget request. See notes below or related CRS reports for additional information on specific years.

a. This number contains appropriations provided by P.L. 111-68 (the FY2010 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act), and $12.96 million in supplemental appropriations provided for the U.S. Capitol Police in P.L. 111-212 (the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2010).

b. This number does not include scorekeeping adjustment.

c. FY2013 level obtained from the CBO cost estimate for "Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2014 (H.J.Res. 59), Including the Amendment Reported by the House Committee on Rules on September 18, 2013 (H.Res. 352) Discretionary spending (in millions of dollars)," which lists a total for legislative branch budget authority of $4.061 billion, noting that it "includes effects of the 2013 sequestration." This bill contained a small anomaly for the legislative branch.

d. Does not include $14.0 million provided to the Government Accountability Office "for audits and investigations relating to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and the 2017 wildfires" (P.L. 115-123, Title IX of Division B, enacted February 9, 2018).

e. The total includes $10.0 million in FY2019 supplemental appropriations for GAO for audits and investigations related to storms and disasters (P.L. 116-20, enacted June 6, 2019).

f. The total does not include $93.1 million in FY2020 supplemental appropriations, including $10.0 million for the Senate, $25.0 million for the House of Representatives, $400,000 for the Office of the Attending Physician, $12.0 million for the Capitol Police, $25.0 million for the Architect of the Capitol, $700,000 for the Library of Congress, and $20.0 million for the Government Accountability Office (CARES Act, P.L. 116-136, enacted March 27, 2020).

g. The total does not include funding provided in the Emergency Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 117-31, July 30, 2021), which provided $448.6 million.

h. The total does not include $7.5 million in supplemental appropriations provided for GAO in P.L. 117-328.

i. The total does not include $10.0 million in supplemental appropriations provided for GAO in P.L. 118-158.

j. The total includes all funding in P.L. 119-37, including Division C, Title I and Title II (general provisions), and funding provided in Division A (the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2026: $522,000 for "Payment to Widows and Heirs of Deceased Members of Congress" and $30.0 million for "United States Capitol Police Mutual Aid Reimbursements").

Table 2. Legislative Branch Appropriations: Prior Enacted Levels and FY2027 Requested and House-Reported Levels

(in thousands of dollars)

Entity	FY2017 Enacted	FY2018 Enacted[a]	FY2019 Enacted[b]	FY2020 Enacted[c]	FY2021 Enacted[d]	FY2022 Enacted	FY2023 Enacted	FY2024 Enacted	FY2025 Enacted	FY2026 Enacted	FY2027 Requested	FY2027 House-Reported[e]
Senate	$871,177	$919,932	$934,667	$969,396	$998,560	$1,094,894	$1,150,349	$1,254,543	$1,324,543	$1,467,139	$1,613,741	—[e]
House	1,189,223	1,200,173	1,232,663	1,365,725	1,476,607	1,715,170	1,847,745	1,850,998	1,878,346	2,083,055	2,219,275	2,108,619
Joint Items[f]	19,565	20,654	20,656	22,643	21,513	22,337	23,114	28,042	23,895	24,958	27,130	26,360
USCP	393,300	426,500	456,308	464,341	515,541	602,509	734,576	791,473	806,473	852,350	1,022,675	907,540
OCWR[g]	3,959	4,959	6,333	6,333	7,500	7,500	8,000	8,150	8,150	8,350	9,081	8,500
CBO	46,500	49,945	50,737	54,941	57,292	60,953	63,237	70,000	70,000	74,750	76,282	76,282
AOC	617,887	712,105	733,745	695,933	675,073	773,898	1,315,002	947,313	830,261	811,916	1,661,672	689,191[e]
LOC (w/CRS)	631,958	669,890	696,112	725,359	757,346	794,019	828,548	852,158	852,158	852,158	883,360	875,239
CRS (non-add)	*107,945*	*119,279*	*125,688*	*120,495*[h]	*125,495*	*129,106*	*133,600*	*136,080*	*136,080*	*136,080*	*140,053*	*139,709*
GPO	117,068	117,068	117,000	117,000	117,000	124,237	129,854	131,999	131,999	132,000	132,000	132,000
GAO	544,506	578,917[a]	589,750[b]	630,000	661,139	719,230	790,319	811,894	811,894[i]	811,894	860,084	611,894
COIL[j]	5,600	5,600	5,600	5,900	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	7,200	6,000
Stennis	430	430	430	430	430	430	430	430	430	430	430	430
Admin. Prov/Adj	-1,000	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000	-3,000	-4,000	-4,000	-1,000	—	-2,000
Other[k]	0	-4,000	-6,000	-7,000	7,000	5,000	5,000	174	0	134,196[l]	—	—
Total Leg. Branch	**$4,440,173**	**$4,700,173** [a]	**$4,836,001** [b]	**$5,049,000** [c]	**$5,304,213** [d]	**$5,924,177**	**$6,899,174** [m]	**$6,749,174** [n]	**$6,740,149** [i]	**$7,258,196** [l]	**$8,512,930**	**$5,440,055** [e]

Sources: P.L. 115-31, P.L. 115-141, P.L. 115-244, P.L. 116-94, P.L. 116-260, P.L. 117-103, P.L. 117-328, P.L. 118-47, P.L. 119-4, P.L. 119-37, explanatory materials for FY2016, FY2017, FY2018, FY2020, FY2021, FY2022, FY2023, FY2024, and FY2026 inserted into the *Congressional Record*, H.Rept. 115-929, the *Budget for Fiscal Year 2027*, H.R. 9010, H.Rept. 119-666, and CRS calculations. See notes below or related CRS reports for additional information on specific years.

a. Does not include emergency appropriation provided by P.L. 115-123. Title IX of Division B provided $14.0 million to GAO "for audits and investigations relating to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and the 2017 wildfires."

b. Does not include emergency appropriation provided by P.L. 116-20. Title IX provided $10.0 million to GAO for audits and investigations related to storms and disasters.

c. The table does not include emergency appropriations of $93.1 million provided in P.L. 116-136 ($10.0 million for the Senate, $25.0 million for the House of Representatives, $400,000 for the Office of the Attending Physician, $12.0 million for the Capitol Police, $25.0 million for the Architect of the Capitol, $700,000 for the Library of Congress, and $20.0 million for the Government Accountability Office).

d. The table does not include provisions in the Emergency Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 117-31, enacted on July 30, 2021) for the House of Representatives, Senate, Capitol Police, or Architect of the Capitol, or emergency appropriations included in P.L. 116-260. Total includes a rescission of $5.212 million.

e. By tradition, the House generally does not consider appropriations for Senate operations or Senate office buildings, and the Senate generally does not consider appropriations for House operations or House office buildings.

f. "Joint Items" generally contains funding for the Joint Economic Committee, the Joint Committee on Taxation, the Office of the Attending Physician, and the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services. In fiscal years prior to an inauguration, it also contains funding for the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (e.g., $1.25 million for FY2016; $1.5 million for FY2020; $3.675 million in FY2024).

g. Formerly known as the Office of Compliance, the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) was renamed by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act (P.L. 115-397).

h. The House Appropriations Committee report (H.Rept. 116-64) describes "Appropriations Shifts to Reflect Centralized Funding for Information Technology" that affected the four LOC appropriations headings. The report states that the House-reported FY2020 level represents an increase of $2.99 million for CRS when reflecting the centralized IT funding.

i. Total does not include $10.0 million provided to GAO "for audits and investigations related to Hurricanes Helene and Milton, and other disasters declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) in calendar years 2023 and 2024" (P.L. 118-158, Division B, Title IX).

j. The FY2022 appropriations act contained a provision changing the name from the Open World Leadership Center to the Congressional Office for International Leadership (COIL).

k. Includes, for example, scorekeeping adjustments, prior-year outlays, or gratuity payments.

l. This includes $522,000 for "Payment to Widows and Heirs of Deceased Members of Congress" and $30.0 million for "United States Capitol Police Mutual Aid Reimbursements," provided in the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-37, Division A). This also includes $103.5 million provided in Title II, Section 212 (Member protection). In addition, the total includes $174,000 provided in Section 6 of P.L. 119-75 for one additional gratuity payment.

m. For example, gratuity payments to heirs of deceased Members of the House. Does not include $7.5 million in supplemental funding provided to GAO (P.L. 117-328).

n. Total includes one gratuity payment to the heir of a deceased Senator as provided in P.L. 118-22 (November 17, 2023). In addition, three gratuity payments were provided pursuant to P.L. 118-83 (September 23, 2024).

Are Member salaries funded or adjusted in the legislative branch appropriations bill?

No, salaries for Members of Congress are neither funded nor increased in the legislative branch bill.

Member salaries have been included as mandatory spending since FY1983, and the amount of potential Member pay adjustments is calculated pursuant to the Ethics Reform Act of 1989, which established a formula based on changes in the Employment Cost Index (ECI).[8] The adjustment automatically takes effect unless (1) Congress statutorily prohibits the adjustment; (2) Congress statutorily revises the adjustment; or (3) the annual base pay adjustment of General Schedule (GS) federal employees is established at a rate less than the scheduled increase for Members, in which case the percentage adjustment for Member pay is automatically lowered to match the percentage adjustment in GS base pay.

Members of Congress last received a pay adjustment in January 2009. Since then, the compensation for most Senators, Representatives, Delegates, and the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico has been $174,000.

The maximum potential 2027 Member pay adjustment is 2.8%, or $4,900.[9]

Legislation has been considered to prevent this adjustment:

- The House-reported FY2027 legislative branch appropriations bill (H.R. 9010, §210) would continue the pay freeze in 2027.
- A House-passed bill to provide continuing appropriations through December 4, 2026 (H.R. 9770, agreed to in the House on July 21, 2026), would have extended the Member pay freeze in this period (§128).
- A Senate-passed bill to provide continuing appropriations through December 11, 2026 (H.R. 6500, as amended, agreed to in the Senate on August 8, 2026), also contained a provision to extend the Member pay freeze in this period (agreed to in the House on September 1, 2026; enacted September 2, 2026, in P.L. 119-103, Division A, §144).

Although discussion of Member pay is often associated with appropriations bills, these bills do not contain language funding or increasing Member pay, and a prohibition on the automatic annual Member pay adjustments could be included in any bill or introduced as a separate bill.

For a list of the laws that have contained provisions prohibiting the annual pay adjustments, see "Table 3. Legislative Vehicles Used for Pay Prohibitions, Enacted Dates, and Pay Language" in CRS Report 97-1011, *Salaries of Members of Congress: Recent Actions and Historical Tables*, by Ida A. Brudnick.

[8] For mandatory spending language, see P.L. 97-51, 95 Stat. 966, September 11, 1981; and, for example, "Table 26-1. Federal Budget By Agency and Account" in *Analytical Perspectives, Budget of the United States Government*, FY2023, pp. 2, 3. For the Ethics Reform Act, see P.L. 101-194, 103 Stat. 1767-1768, November 30, 1989.

[9] The potential Member pay adjustment was determined by a formula using the Employment Cost Index (private industry wages and salaries, not seasonally adjusted), based on the 12-month percentage change reported for the quarter ending December 31, minus 0.5%. The 2.8% potential adjustment was determined by taking the percentage increase in the index between the quarters ending December 2024 and December 2025, which was 3.3%, and subtracting 0.5%. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Cost Index—December 2025, February 10, 2026, Table 9. Pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §4501(2)(A), this amount is "rounded to the nearest multiple of $100."

In contrast, the salaries and benefits for legislative branch employees are provided by the legislative branch appropriations acts, although they generally do not address pay adjustments.[10]

Author Information

Ida A. Brudnick
Specialist on the Congress

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[10] Rather, adjustments may be determined by employing authorities (in the case of House and Senate employees) or broader or agency-specific pay systems. For example, see the *Orders of the Speaker of the House of Representatives* (issued pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §4532 note); *Orders of the President pro Tempore* (issued pursuant to 2 U.S.C. §4571); and laws governing employment for individual agencies, positions, or pay systems.