

H.R. 4851 – A One Month, Not-Offset Extension Bill For Certain Federal Programs

This Bill Costs \$9.15 billion

Congress is attempting to push through without debate or any spending offset a one-month extension bill of a number of critical federal programs. This extension bill, H.R. 4851, is expected to cost over **\$9.15 billion according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).**¹

This bill would extend by one month:

- Unemployment insurance coverage (\$6.985 billion total cost);
- COBRA Assistance(\$1.047 billion total cost);
- Medicare subsidy payment rates for physicians (\$1.058 billion total cost);
- Medicare therapy caps exceptions (\$30 million total cost);
- Poverty Guidelines (\$31 million total cost);
- National Flood Insurance Program (unknown total cost);
- Copyright license used by satellite television providers one-month extension (\$4 million total);

This bill would also provide compensation for federal employees furloughed during March 1st and 2nd as the result of Congress not being able to pass an extension in time (\$1 million transfer from the Highway Trust Fund) and clarify that certain doctors in outpatient facilities are eligible for health IT payments under Medicare and Medicaid (unknown cost).

This Cost is Not Offset

Instead of finding an offset to comply with Congress' self-imposed Pay-Go rules, Congress has decided to designate this spending as "emergency" spending.

This places the \$9.15 billion bill cost outside of the Congressional budget limits, even though this amount is still added to our growing national debt.

If Congress continues to pass extensions every 30 days, costing taxpayers \$9 billion, by December we will have added another \$81 billion to the deficit, and still failed to actually address the long term problem.

¹ <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/113xx/doc11352/hr4851.pdf>

Congress Has To Prioritize Costs

Congress has for too long failed to prioritize national needs and instead has elected to saddle future generations of Americans with a national debt that is now greater than \$12.6 trillion. The 2010 deficit is projected to amount to \$1.3 trillion and we are borrowing 43 cents on every dollar; yet, Congress continues to increase spending without any correlating spending cuts.

One month ago, Congress passed a similar extension bill (H.R. 4691) with a not-offset cost of \$10.3 billion. Instead of supporting Senator Bunning's attempt to find a way to pay for this cost, Members of Congress attacked him for holding up this measure from being considered without ANY debate.

Congress has passed at least four major extensions bills in just the past six months. If Congress keeps on approving these temporary extension bills through the year, Congress will have added almost \$100 billion to our national debt just through these extension bills.

Additionally, the Senate has already approved \$120 billion outside of the spirit of Pay-Go legislation passed just over one month ago. The Senate has approved more than \$120 billion in new federal spending not paid for with a reduction in spending elsewhere in the budget.

House Appropriations Chairman David Obey has even indicated that some new spending needs to be offset with unused, unobligated funds. The Senate should likewise find a way to offset this one-month extension bill and create a sustainable precedent.