



Congress Passes Federal Budget

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On Wednesday, May 3, a measure passed the House 309-118 to support a \$1.1 trillion budget that would avert a shutdown and fund the government through September. The Senate approved the bill on Thursday by a vote of 79-18. The bill now heads to the President's desk and must be signed by midnight Friday in order to avoid government shutdown, amid some concern that he will not support the budget which lacks some of his key demands. Trump has stated that he will not support a budget that does not meet his standard of domestic spending cuts and defense spending increases. While the budget would not pay for the Mexico-US border wall, it would spend \$300 million fixing existing border infrastructure in California and Arizona. The bill also includes a military spending increase, in-line with the President's demand. Still, while it is looking as though it will pass through the Senate with ease, some are wary of its approval by the President who sent out tweets Tuesday saying that the country needs "a good shutdown". With vast bipartisan support and only 103 Republicans voting no, this would be a big win for the Democratic minority. Leaders from both sides have publicly praised this bill, with Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the Democratic leader calling it "a product to be proud of", along with Speaker Paul Ryan's endorsement of the bill

being “a good one for conservatives”. If passed, this bill would result in more assistance for poor Americans from healthcare to housing.

The following are a few of the highlights from the proposed budget:

- Appropriates \$2 billion to California, West Virginia, Louisiana, and North Carolina for disaster relief as well as establishing a permanent fix to provide healthcare to retired coal miners
- Funds HUD programs either at or above FY16 levels, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) as well as the HOME Investment Partnerships Program which will be kept at \$3,060 million and \$950 million respectively
- Provides \$20.292 billion for tenant-based rental assistance, \$18.355 billion of which would renew previous contracts
- Includes \$47 million for Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH), \$7 million of which is to Native American veterans
- Designates \$120 million for Section 811 mainstream vouchers.
- Provides \$10.816 billion to renew project-based rental assistance - a \$186 million increase from FY16
- Would increase public housing units for conversion under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program to 225,000 from 185,000, as well as extending the sunset date to 2020
- Homeless assistance programs would see a funding increase from \$2.25 billion to \$2.383 billion
- Would waive the requirement for homeless youth under 25 to provide third-party documentation to benefit from housing and supportive services

- Allocates \$43 million to address homeless youth
- Includes \$502 million to the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program, which would cover the renewal of all existing contracts, in addition to providing \$10 million to build new units or provide rental assistance
- The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative's funding would be bumped from \$125 million to \$138 million
- Require HUD to establish a new system to process data on how PHAs are complying with lead-based paint regulations in properties that use Section 8 vouchers.
- Require HUD to take action against property owners of that do not maintain safe properties
- Provides \$2.94 billion for rural development programs, a \$ \$166 million increase

The legislation does not include some of the administration's top priorities such as including money for the border wall or funding restrictions on Planned Parenthood or sanctuary cities.