

This month, the House and the Senate released and voted on their respective budget resolutions for fiscal year (FY) 2014, in addition to passing a Continuing Resolution to fund the government to the end of FY 2013. The chart below highlights the stark differences between the two budgets, specifically on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

	Continuing Resolution (H.R. 933)	House Budget, FY 2014 ("Ryan Budget") (H. Con. Res. 25)	Senate Budget, FY 2014 ("Murray Budget") (S. Con. Res. 8)
Status	Passed Senate: 73-26; Passed House: 318-109	Passed House: 221-207.	Passed Senate: 50-49.
Overview	Funds the federal government through September 30, 2013, the end of the fiscal year at sequester levels.	Seeks to balance the federal budget in ten years through \$4.6 trillion in federal spending cuts while giving \$5.7 trillion in new tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations.	Sets goal of reducing the deficit by \$1.85 trillion between spending cuts and tax increases.
Cuts Medicare?	Implements the sequester, which includes a 2% cut to providers, including doctors	Yes. Voucherizes Medicare, by providing limited stipend, raises Medicare age, allows for further means-testing of the program (seniors with incomes over \$47,000 could pay higher premiums).	Yes. \$265 billion in Medicare cuts, however, this would be done by cutting waste and thru delivery system reform, not benefit cuts.
Cuts Medicaid?	No cuts to benefits.	Yes. Guts Medicaid by converting it into block-grant program run by the states; almost \$800 billion in cuts.	Yes. \$10 billion in Medicaid cuts; however, ACA implementation must not be affected.
Cuts Social Security?	No.	Opens the door to fast-track changes in Social Security.	No.
Replace or Repeal Sequester?	Implements Sequester.	Keeps the across-the-board sequester cuts in place through 2023.	Replaces sequester with balanced measures, including \$460 billion in new revenues, \$240 billion in defense discretionary spending cuts; and \$240 billion in non-defense discretionary cuts.
Repeals ACA?	No benefits repealed.	Yes.	No.

Senate Amendments: The Senate also considered 101 amendments to their budget proposal, including the notable amendments listed below. While the amendments were nonbinding (because a budget resolution itself is non-binding; it is more a tool to set priorities), they are useful in gauging support or opposition to an issue.

- Stabenow Amendment 432
 - Purpose: To ban the privatization of the Medicare system through the Ryan “voucher” scheme.
 - Outcome: Passed 96-3.
- Johnson Amendment 213 (Ron Johnson, R-WI)
 - Purpose: To require budgets to make Social Security and Medicare solvent for 75 years
 - Outcome: Failed 46-53.
- Cruz Amendment 202
 - Purpose: To repeal the Affordable Care Act
 - Outcome: Failed 45-54.
- Sanders-Hirono-Harkin Amendment 198
 - Purpose: To oppose using the chained CPI to cut benefits for Social Security recipients and disabled veterans.
 - Outcome: Passed by voice vote.

Outlook: A fight over the debt ceiling looms large later this year, especially given the stark differences between the Senate and House budgets. The need to raise the nation’s \$16.6 trillion debt ceiling this summer might be seen as an opportunity to forge a grand bargain that both raises tax revenues and cuts Medicare, Medicaid or Social Security benefits. Alternatively, there could be some sort of smaller agreement or they very well may end up doing yet another continuing resolution to keep the government running.

TALKING POINTS

OPPOSE RYAN’S BUDGET:

- The Ryan budget unfairly proposes giving seniors vouchers rather than the guaranteed benefits of Medicare. These vouchers would not keep up with costs, and seniors would be out more and more money every year.
- There are reasonable ways to balance our budget and this is not it. We can’t ask seniors and the middle class to give more while corporate America continues to thrive and get more handouts.

SUPPORT MURRAY’S BUDGET:

- This is a responsible approach to tackling our country’s fiscal priorities over the coming decade while making necessary investments to create jobs immediately.
- This budget reduces our deficit through both new revenue and targeted spending cuts without cutting Medicare, Medicaid or Social Security benefits.