

Remarks on HR 8380
House Appropriations Committee
July 21, 2026

Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your support of HR 8380 and for affording me the time to discuss it with your committee.

I believe the Budget Act of 1974 establishes a methodical, logical and powerful process to bring spending in line with revenues. But it doesn't work very well.

One problem is that it requires hard tradeoffs and decisions, and sorry, there's nothing we can do about that. Periodically, we hear calls for a new bi-partisan debt commission. Of course, we already have one – it is called the U.S. Congress.

And Congress does have a clear process. The budget act requires both houses to set limits on both discretionary and mandatory spending by April 15th each year. The discretionary limits – the 302A allocations, go to the Appropriations committee, which dutifully mark up 12 appropriation bills. And the House works overtime to craft those bills. The mandatory limits are supposed to be sent as instructions to the committees of jurisdiction to adjust statutes to adhere to those levels, with all of those changes dropped into the reconciliation bill.

But here is the problem: the appropriations bills are subject to cloture, which means the hard work of the House ends up simply being blocked by a minority of the Senate. The clock runs out and Congress is then faced with the Hobson's choice of a shutdown or throwing away the appropriations bills and voting a continuing resolution.

This also works havoc on the reconciliation process. Because reconciliation gets expedited consideration in the Senate, it is often used, as it is right now, not to comprehensively address out-of-control mandatory spending, but rather to address whatever shiny object or exigency that presents itself at the moment. That's how the House got wrapped around the axle on Obamacare in 2017. It's how we passed the big beautiful bill last year. The BBB was a remarkable accomplishment addressing a variety of majority objectives through the reconciliation act – but not

the one for which the process is designed: a balanced budget. And of course, most recently we used it to address the impasse over DHS funding and currently, for defense funding and election reform. In my opinion, all worthy objectives, but once again, not the objective of the Budget Act.

So, this bill makes one simple change. It provides the same expedited consideration for appropriations bills in the Senate as we already give the reconciliation bill.

This isn't a cure-all. The fiscal decisions attendant to the budget aren't going to be any easier. And since the Senate and the House are designed to disagree, it will still require intense negotiations between the houses. But it would at least remove the blockage that often prevents that discussion from taking place, and it reduces the temptation to misuse reconciliation to bypass cloture.