

WASHINGTON ★ WATCH

FROM THE DESK OF CONGRESSMAN ROB WOODALL

Encouraging the President to Stop Offering Budgets that Never Balance

Federal law requires the President submit a budget proposal to Congress by the first Monday in February each year. The first Monday in February 2013 came and went this year and we did not see a budget from the President. The President informed Congress a few weeks ago that for the fourth time in five years, he would not meet the February statutory deadline.

Disappointment in the President's repeated tardiness aside, last week the House of Representatives voted on and passed H.R. 444, the "Require a PLAN Act," which requires the President—when he does finally produce a budget plan—to tell Congress and America when that budget will reach balance.

The notion of providing a balanced budget—or a budget at all, for that matter—should be neither new nor controversial, and yet for the past four years, the President has been submitting budgets that never, ever reach balance—not in 10 years, not in 20 years, not in 50 years, not ever. America needs leadership, and I am proud that again this year, as we have in the past two years that I have served you in Congress, the House will pass a plan to balance America's budget and begin to pay down our debt. The President's past plans have chosen never to pay back a penny of our debt and to in fact grow the debt on our children forever. That is a plan for America's failure. America deserves better from our President, and H.R. 444 requires better from him.

You can read my official statement on the passage of H.R. 444 by clicking [here](#).

CBO Report Warns of Challenges Ahead

Last week the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office released its Budget and Economic Outlook for 2013-2023. Some good news, CBO projects an \$845 billion deficit for FY2013, which means we have succeeded in reducing our budget deficit to its lowest levels since 2008. Considering the partisan challenges facing Congress, I'm proud of the progress we have made in the House to begin turning this ship around. Yet, \$845 billion is still a disturbingly large reminder that Washington has more work to do to get its spending under control.

CBO projects the unemployment rate will remain above 7.5% through 2014; this will mark the longest period that the unemployment rate has remained that high in over 70 years.

You can read the full report by clicking [here](#). I am working diligently with my colleagues on the House Budget Committee to draft another responsible budget that allows us to shore up our financial commitments and expand economic opportunity. While I cannot begin to predict when we will see the President's budget proposal or whether the Senate will end its shameful streak of having passed no budget at all for the past four years, I can commit that you will see the House Budget Committee's

proposal before our statutory deadline in April, and I believe that it will be a budget that will make you proud and give you hope about the federal government's fiscal future.

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I'm pleased to welcome freshman Congressman Markwayne Mullin (R-OK) as the 59th cosponsor of the FairTax in the 113th Congress. With your help, we shattered the previous record for original cosponsors last month when we introduced the FairTax, and we continue to gain new supporters every week. It's clear to me that America is ready for tax reform. I appreciate all your hard work in making sure that Washington finally gives the American people the simple, fair, and transparent tax code they deserve.

Outlook for the Week

Below is a brief rundown of what will be happening in Congress this week.

- The President will deliver his State of the Union Address to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday, February 12, at 9:00PM.
- House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers and ranking Democrat Dutch Ruppersberger will introduce a cyber security information-sharing bill on February 13. The bill would authorize companies that own "critical" infrastructure to share cyber security information with each other and the government, tearing down barriers that today prevent the cooperation of the government and the private sector to fight foreign security threats. While the final bill has yet to be posted, a near-identical version was passed in the House last year. You can read this bill by [clicking here](#).
- The House Rules Committee will meet to consider H.R. 273, the Federal Employee Pay Freeze Bill, on Wednesday, February 13, at 3:00PM. You can watch the Rules hearing live by [visiting the Rules website here](#). H.R. 273 will likely come to the House Floor for a vote on Thursday.
- The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's subcommittee on National Security will conduct a hearing entitled: "U.S. Direct Assistance in Afghanistan: Ensuring Transparency and Accountability," on Wednesday, February 13, at 10:00AM. [You can watch the hearing live by clicking here.](#)

That's all for this week's *Washington Watch*. Thank you for all that you do to keep America strong. As always, if there is anything I can ever do to be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Member of Congress