## Uniqueness

#### Status quo: Republican Senate wants to avoid shutdown

Groves and Jalonick 2023

STEPHEN GROVES AND MARY CLARE JALONICK cover federal politics for the Associated Press. “Senate passes defense bill with bipartisan support, but clash looms with House over social issues” published in the Associated Press on 7/27/23. (<https://apnews.com/article/senate-defense-bill-russia-bipartisan-9529180a3c79aa3c28d96bd074983e45>) - RK

The Senate has passed a massive annual defense bill that would deliver a 5.2% pay raise for service members and keep the nation’s military operating, avoiding partisan policy battles with an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote. Senate passage, 86-11, sets up a clash with the House, which passed its own version of the annual defense bill along party lines earlier this month after pointed debates over social issues like abortion access and diversity initiatives. The sharply partisan arguments over the House legislation veered from a bipartisan tradition of finding consensus on national defense policy. The strong bipartisan vote for the legislation in the Senate Thursday evening, just before the Senate left for its August recess, could give it momentum as the two chambers next look to settle their differences in the fall Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said there is a “glaring contrast” between the two chambers' defense bills. The Senate had no “animus or acrimony,” in contrast to the House's partisan battles, he said. Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that “I don’t think either party got exactly what they wanted” in the Senate bill. But he said the legislation would help the military improve recruitment and prevent conflict. The two chambers will now have to write a final bill, a test of the deeply divided House, in particular, as the traditionally bipartisan legislation was swept up in the disputes over race, equity and women’s health care that have been political priorities for the Republican party. Wicker said talks with the House will start “very soon” and he feels confident they will be able to pass the legislation, as Congress has annually since 1961. “We always have,” Wicker said. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., a member of the Armed Services panel, predicted the bipartisan Senate approach would mostly prevail. “The fact that we’re going to have a strong bipartisan approach on it says that we’re probably closer to where we’re going to end up than what the House has done on a partisan basis,” said Rounds.

#### The Freedom Caucus is willing to avoid a shutdown if spending levels stay low

Emma and Scholtes 2023

Caitlin Emma and Jennifer Scholtes cover US politics for Politico. “House Republicans start their funding battle with shutdown looming” published in Politico on 7/24/23. (<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/07/24/republicans-budget-funding-shutdown-0010761>) - RK

Both parties have long anticipated a September showdown over keeping the government funded. This week, House Republicans will take their first shot in the fiscal battle. House GOP leaders are hustling to build enough support to pass two of their easier annual spending bills among the broader group of a dozen proposals — most of them dogged by unpopular spending cuts, billions of dollars in rescinded cash and controversial attempts to make policy using the federal purse. If Republicans can pass either of those two bills before leaving Washington for their August recess, they would score the first wins of the season on spending. Such a moment would echo their springtime passage of a conservative-leaning debt limit bill that helped force President Joe Biden to the negotiating table. But passage is far from certain for Speaker Kevin McCarthy, who will need the full support of deeply fractured members as he continues to snub bipartisan funding negotiations. Looming just a few months away, on Sept. 30, is a potential government shutdown. Across the Capitol, senators are waiting to see how the House drama plays out — with their bipartisan funding talks running behind McCarthy’s go-it-alone strategy. “Hopefully we can avoid a government shutdown and all the craziness that those crazy bastards are going to do over there,” Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), who oversees defense funding in the upper chamber, said of House Republicans. “If you want to shut down, we will shut down. If they want to get the bills done, we’ll get the bills done,” he said. McCarthy’s biggest hurdle in the funding debate is a bloc of House Freedom Caucus members who want even deeper reductions to the spending bills after already forcing the California Republican to slash far below the levels he agreed to with Biden last month. Those conservatives’ goal: hack funding to levels last seen two years ago, without counting the clawback of money already signed into law. However, the speaker won’t necessarily need to reach a grand accord with his conservatives to win enough votes to pass one or two of the funding bills that he wants on the floor next week. As long as any spending measure that comes to the floor is close to the right flank’s desired budget levels, shrinking the rest of the dozen bills can be negotiated later, said Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas).“At some point, we can figure those out a little bit on the fly,” added Roy, a prominent Freedom Caucus member. “We’re trying to work in good faith, again focused on the pre-Covid-level spending.”

#### The Freedom Caucus plans to leverage the threat of a shutdown to force Dems to accept cuts to government services

Talbot and Fox 2023

Haley Talbot and Lauren Fox are CNN politics reporters. “House Freedom Caucus previews looming appropriations fight” published in CNN on 7/25/23. (<https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/25/politics/house-freedom-caucus-government-funding/index.html>) - RK

House Republicans are bracing for a bruising showdown with the White House and the US Senate this fall as House Speaker Kevin McCarthy once again will have to decide how far he’s willing to go to assuage the demands of the far right members in his ranks. On Tuesday, the House Freedom Caucus sent a clear signal that they must see all 12 appropriations bills totaled up and fired a warning shot to leadership to hold firm on the agreements made in an earlier deal to avoid government debt default. “We want to see all 12 of the appropriations bills,” Freedom Caucus member Matt Rosendale, a Montana Republican, told reporters. “We want leadership to uphold their end of the deal.” He added, “If leadership believes they are going to trickle these out two at a time, three a week, four a week, that is just not going to be feasible because we will never be able to see what the total spending is until the very end. And then when we then try to uphold our commitment, our word to the American people that we will not push spending beyond the 1.471 (trillion dollars) for non-defense discretionary.” If lawmakers can’t reach a deal, it could lead to a shut down or a longer term stop gap measure that would just fund the federal government at the same levels it’s been at throughout the year. But, a stopgap measure is still a gamble. That’s because a provision in the bill to raise the debt ceiling in June would automatically inject a 1% cut if lawmakers fail to pass and sign into law all 12 appropriations bills. A stopgap measure would be subject to that cut, which would go into effect in April. Rep. Andy Biggs, a Republican from Arizona, predicted there will not be a government shutdown, however. “The House is gonna say no, we’re gonna pass a good Republican bill out of the House and force the Senate and the White House to accept it, or we’re not going to move forward,” he said. “What would happen if Republicans for once stared down the Democrats and were the ones who refuse to cave and to betray the American people and the trust they put in us when they gave the majority? So we don’t fear a government shutdown.” Rep. Bob Good, a Virginia Republican, instead said the House should leverage a shutdown into getting their priorities and “stare down” the Democrats. He pointed to the failure, in their view, of the Fiscal Responsibility Act and that the appropriations process was promised as a potential avenue to get their priorities through. The dome of the U.S. Capitol is reflected in a window on Capitol Hill in Washington, U.S., April 20, 2023. REUTERS/Amanda Andrade-Rhoades Republicans race to build support for spending bills as divisions loom large “It was said by leadership at that time that we will use the appropriations process that the FRA was the ceiling, not the floor. That we would go back to pre-Covid level spending for non-defense discretionary (spending) and we’re calling on Republicans to do that very thing,” he said. The House is scheduled to begin consideration of two of the 12 spending bills this week with votes expected as soon as Wednesday on a bill to fund military construction and veterans’ affairs and another bill funding agriculture programs and rural development expected to receive a vote later in the week. The votes will test the GOP leadership’s ability to unite the conference and win over the votes of conservatives, some of whom have never voted for the spending bills in the past. Yet even if House Republicans manage to pass two of their spending bills with a narrow margin, they’ll have 10 more to consider and just weeks to do so when they return in September before the funding deadline. One of McCarthy’s promises to his conference in January to secure the speakership was that he would move all 12 spending bills through so-called regular order. But getting the bills out of the House is just the first hurdle. House and Senate appropriators have been working through their bills with little coordination. The House is moving their bills at lower levels than what was agreed to as part of the debt ceiling deal McCarthy struck with the White House in May. Meanwhile, Senate appropriators agreed to inject an additional $13 billion in emergency spending to boost defense and non-defense spending last week increasing the gap between the two sides even further. It’s a messy fight that could take time to sort out in a conference committee assuming House Republicans can remain united enough to get all of their bills through the House before the October 1 deadline. Senate and House leaders could move a short-term spending bill, which is looking more likely, in order to ensure that the House and Senate have time to work out their differences. But even if House and Senate appropriators can cut a deal in the middle, McCarthy’s right flank is already warning that McCarthy could face backlash if he brings a bill to the floor that has higher spending levels than what the House hardliners are looking for.

## Link

#### Democratic social security proposals are diametrically opposed to even the most moderate Republican plans

Miller 2023

Mark Miller reports on politics for the New York Times. “Fixing Social Security and Medicare: Where the Parties Stand” published in the New York Times on 2/18/23. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/18/business/fixing-social-security-and-medicare-where-the-parties-stand.html>) - RK

Republicans and Democrats have starkly different visions for how to avert insolvency for the trust funds. As a candidate for president, Mr. Biden proposed adding a new tier of payroll tax contributions for people with incomes over $400,000. That would extend solvency by roughly five years. The Social Security 2100 Act, sponsored by Representative John Larson, Democrat of Connecticut, enjoys widespread support in the Democratic caucus. It mirrors President Biden’s payroll tax proposal. Social Security 2100 includes a 2 percent across-the-board boost in benefits, and it would shift the annual cost-of-living increase to a more generous formula. It also includes targeted benefit increases such as a new minimum benefit level for very low income seniors, and improved benefits for widows and widowers. It also would provide caregiver credits that increase benefits for people who take time out of the work force to care for dependent family members. ADVERTISEMENT SKIP ADVERTISEMENT Just this week, Senators Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts introduced the latest version of their own Social Security proposal. It would extend solvency by 75 years, give nearly all beneficiaries an increase of $200 per month through a revision in the benefit formula and adopt a more generous annual cost-of-living increase. It would be funded by applying current FICA tax rates to incomes above $250,000, and with two new taxes on investment income. How about the Republicans’ plans? President Biden provoked an uproar by calling out a proposal made last year by Senator Rick Scott of Florida that calls for “all federal legislation to sunset in five years” and would “force Congress to issue a report every year telling the public what they plan to do when Social Security and Medicare go bankrupt.” Senator Ron Johnson of Wisconsin also has suggested that Congress review spending on the two programs regularly. Mr. Scott dropped Social Security and Medicare from his proposal on Friday, and it had not been widely embraced by his party — but neither has any other plan. Former President Donald J. Trump recently warned Republicans not to cut Social Security or Medicare benefits, and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has said that cuts are “off the table.” “I think there’s no consensus at all,” said Andrew G. Biggs, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a leading conservative expert on Social Security policy. “Republicans are saying things like, ‘I don’t want to cut benefits, and I don’t want to raise taxes, either. And my mother is on Social Security.’ It’s all at the surface level.” The most substantive Republican Social Security plan comes from a group of conservative lawmakers in the House of Representatives as part of a broader federal budget plan. The group, the Republican Study Committee, calls for significant benefit cuts for all but the lowest-income workers by gradually raising the F.R.A. to 70, and through changes to the benefit formula that would sharply cut benefits for middle-income and affluent workers.

#### Universal Basic Income is expensive

Howard 2023

Michael W. Howard is a professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Maine, as well as former president of the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network, “The U.S. Could Help Solve Its Poverty Problem with a Universal Basic Income” published in Scientific American on 1/6/23. (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-u-s-could-help-solve-its-poverty-problem-with-a-universal-basic-income/#:~:text=In%20addition%20to%20the%20belief,about%20%244%20trillion%20a%20year>) - RK

In addition to the belief that people will quit their jobs under a basic income, the idea faces another hurdle: apparent cost. A basic income of $1,000/month for every person in the U.S. would have a gross cost of about $4 trillion a year. A means-tested minimum income guarantee, which phases out as earned income increases above a threshold, could raise incomes by the same amount for perhaps one sixth of the gross cost of a basic income. However, the net cost to the taxpayers is no greater for basic income than for a means-tested minimum income, because the higher taxes some will pay are offset by the basic income they receive. To the extent that the mere fact of “churning”—money going out to everyone, only to be taken back in taxes from some—is an obstacle to political support, the means-tested guaranteed income may be the more politically feasible policy, but it would lose some of the advantages of universal programs.

#### Republicans only support regressive basic income policies, the aff will immediately trigger because its seen as expansionary

Santens 2023

Scott Santens is a UBI advocate, author of “Let there be Money”, and Senior Adviser to Humanity Forward. “The FairTax would implement a Universal Basic Income” published on scottsantens.com on 1/25/23. (<https://www.scottsantens.com/fair-tax-would-implement-universal-basic-income-ubi-fairtax/>) - RK

Basic income. $279 every month. Tax free money from the government. No work requirements. No income-testing. For every legal resident of the United States, every month, with additional income for kids depending on number of kids. That's the fully universal basic income that the Republican FairTax Act proposes that the ultra-conservative Freedom Caucus of the House wants to pass into law as a truly massive reform of our tax system. The UBI is called the Family Consumption Allowance, and referred to in general as a "prebate," but call it whatever you want, it's a UBI. And the only reason it's even being talked about is because some far-right members of Congress demanded that the FairTax get a vote as part of the deal Kevin McCarthy agreed to in order to become House Speaker. In this post, I'm not going to get too deep into the details of the tax side of the Fair Tax, and the implications of replacing our entire income tax system with a consumption tax. There's plenty of other content out there about that. What there isn't a lot of content about is the UBI it proposes, so that's what I want to focus on. First, why is there a universal unconditional basic income as part of the FairTax? It's a side-effect of replacing income taxes with a consumption tax. Right now, we have an income tax system that's paired with a standard deduction of $12,950 in 2023. This means that someone who earns $12,951 would only be seen as having $1 of taxable income. The intent of the deduction is to not tax people in poverty. So what happens when a national sales tax makes everything cost more? Well, those people not paying income taxes, because they're in poverty, would suddenly be in even greater poverty thanks to being able to buy less stuff with the same amount of money. Poverty would increase in America in a very dramatic fashion with a national sales tax alone. That's where the Family Consumption Allowance comes in. The thinking is that if we add a sales tax to everything, we need to rebate that tax to those in poverty. That's how the amount of the prebate is calculated. The federal poverty line in 2023 is defined as $14,580. The FairTax proposes to tax 23% of the total price (tax inclusive) of all retail prices, so in order to not hit people below the poverty line with the tax, everyone would need to get an amount of money that is equal to 23% of the federal poverty line. That's $3,353. Because everyone needs money to buy what they need on a monthly basis, then that's $279 each and every month. Because the federal poverty line varies according to household size, the larger the household, the more money to afford higher prices. I should note here though that the prebate amount should actually be $365 per month because the FairTax seeks to impose a new 30% tax, which means that the total tax imposition at the federal poverty line would be $4,374. That's the amount that is 23% of $14,580 + $4,374. I have no idea what their reasoning is here to not do that. It could be a mistake based on the confusion of saying the tax is 23% of the price plus the tax instead of 30% of the price alone, or it could be a matter of leveraging that confusion to lowball the amount of the prebate. So that's where the amount of $279 a month comes from. But why give the money to everyone instead of only those with lower incomes? Because the plan is to get rid of the IRS. Without the IRS, the government will no longer track people's incomes. The government will not know how much money anyone is making, so there's no way to do any income testing. Instead, the Social Security Administration would send the money based on what they know about who has a Social Security number, and people would only be required to register each year with the "sales tax administering authority" in the state in which they reside. Also this is already how things currently work with the standard deduction. Everyone gets the standard deduction. You can be a billionaire earning hundreds of millions of dollars a year and you can claim the standard deduction. Although most billionaires don't because they can also choose to get an even larger tax deduction by itemizing deductions, but the fact remains, no one pays any income taxes on earnings below the amount of the standard deduction. It's universal. Because the Fair Tax would replace all income taxes, that includes ending the standard deduction, and because there's no way of knowing people's incomes without an IRS, there needs to be an amount of money that goes to everyone as an income floor to afford the tax hike on spending up to the poverty line. And thus the result is a small unconditional basic income. The logic may be to rebate the sales tax on the amount of stuff people below the poverty line buy, but the result is to provide people an income without any means-tests or work requirements. If someone can figure out how to live on $279 a month, then someone can do that. No employment required. It's a basic income. For a married couple, it's a combined income of $558 a month. The excuse to provide that income is a sales tax rebate, but the fact remains that it's enough to pay for food without working for food. So anyone who supports the Fair Tax and its prebate is not opposed to the idea of an unconditional basic income. However small the floor would be, they support a fully unconditional and universal income floor that starts at $279 a month vs today's $0 a month. If you've read this far, as a progressive, maybe you're thinking this actually sounds kind of interesting, and as a conservative, maybe you're thinking this actually sounds less interesting than you thought, but here's where I'll mention a couple other things I think people should know about the FairTax plan besides the UBI. What FairTax advocates don't really advertise is the fact that besides the standard deduction which the FairTax UBI would essentially replace, there are also programs like the child tax credit (CTC) and earned income tax credit (EITC) that would also be ended, and go unreplaced. So right now, some people are not only paying zero taxes, but are also getting income from the government each year from the IRS. Whereas the FairTax proposes to not tax people in poverty just like income taxes don't tax people in poverty, the income tax system also helps reduce poverty through refundable tax credits. This means that some people currently in poverty or near poverty currently receiving CTC and/or EITC payments would absolutely be worse off with the FairTax even with the monthly prebate. The average amount of EITC received in 2021 was $2,411, and the CTC reduces taxes by up to $2,000 per kid. The FairTax doesn't try to replace any tax expenditures except for the standard deduction. This is true not only for the poor, but also the middle class. Middle class households who itemize their deductions currently enjoy the home mortgage interest deduction among other deductions. All those deductions would disappear too. So on the one hand, people pay more for stuff with a FairTax, and on the other, people get a small UBI and get to potentially keep more of their paycheck when payroll taxes are eliminated, but there are definitely winners and losers depending on the tax subsidies people are currently enjoying but not recognizing as government assistance because it's in the tax code as credits and deductions. There's also the issue of ending a progressively-tiered tax system with a consumption tax. Right now, low-income earners pay less than the FairTax would tax them, even with the prebate, and high-income earners pay more than the FairTax would tax them, so it's likely that the FairTax would be an overall regressive reform that would further increase inequality.

#### A federal job guarantee would cost a ton and infuriate critics of ‘big government’

Kim 2018

Anne Kim is a former Senior Fellow at The Progressive Policy Institute. “Guaranteed Jobs: Too Big to Succeed” published in the Progressive Policy Institute on 5/4/18. (<https://www.progressivepolicy.org/publication/guaranteed-jobs-too-big-to-succeed/>) - RK

As the party out of power, Democrats have the luxury of thinking big as they consider how to topple President Donald Trump in 2020. Bold, ambitious ideas are what the party sorely needs if it is to capture voters’ attention and woo them from Trump’s corrosive grip. But if Democrats are to craft a winning agenda for 2020, bigness and boldness alone are insufficient; political feasibility and substantive plausibility are also necessary ingredients. That’s why the latest big and bold idea catching the eye of potential 2020 contenders – a federal jobs guarantee – is ultimately a disappointment. Touted by advocates as a way to achieve “permanent full employment,” the notion of a federally guaranteed job for anyone who wants one has won support from three rumored presidential hopefuls so far, including New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker. Last week, Booker revealed draft legislation to pilot a federal jobs guarantee program in up to 15 localities nationwide, while Sanders has floated a much more ambitious national plan focused on public works projects at a scale not seen since the Great Depression. Under both proposals, participants would earn wages of up to $15 an hour, along with benefits such as paid family and sick leave and health insurance. “There is great dignity in work – and in America, if you want to provide for your family, you should be able to find a full-time job that pays a fair wage,” said Booker in a press release announcing his effort. Booker’s endorsement speaks to the inherent surface appeal of a jobs guarantee. To borrow President Bill Clinton’s famous formulation, Americans who “work hard and play by the rules” deserve a shot at self-sufficiency, and the promise of work for all who want it invokes Americans’ innate sense of fair play. Proponents also rightly point out stark disparities in employment between certain groups, the result of discrimination and other structural barriers that guaranteed access to meaningful employment could arguably remedy.Unfortunately, the idea also suffers from a variety of fatal defects, including its size, timing and relevance and any number of practical obstacles that make it administratively unworkable as well as politically untenable. For one thing, it rests on the dubious assumption that the American electorate – at a time when public cynicism and distrust toward government remain at all-time highs– is ready to embrace a dramatically expanded role for the federal government as the nation’s largest staffing agency and employer. More fundamentally, the idea betrays a deep lack of faith in the inherent resilience of the American economy and its people to weather disruption and change. Most Americans don’t share the left’s inordinate confidence in government’s ability to engineer shared prosperity from the top down. Aggressive advocacy of a panacea like government guaranteed jobs can only reinforce public impressions that progressives will always default to “big government” as the solution to complex economic problems. While a federal jobs guarantee certainly passes the “bigness” test, its very bigness is a central conceptual weakness, at least in the current political environment. It is far too large a hammer in search of a nail. According to the leading proposal for a national guaranteed jobs program, it would cost roughly $543 billion a year to create 10.7 million new federal jobs covering every worker unemployed or underemployed in January 2018 (a figure known as “U.6”). That would put the number of job guarantee participants at nearly five times the size of the entire current federal workforce. It’s hard to fathom why proponents believe there is public appetite for a jobs program of this scale today, especially given that the nation’s official unemployment rate is at its lowest in nearly 20 years, employers in many places are complaining of worker shortages, the economy is set to grow at a solid pace and fears of inflation are currently preoccupying central bankers and financial markets. And even though workforce participation is lower than it could or should be compared to historical standards, the magnitude of unemployment and underemployment is nowhere near what it was the last time a massive federal works program was proposed and implemented, which was during the Great Depression. Then, unemployment rates were running at upwards of 15 to 25 percent while the private sector was wholly crippled. Though some proponents might imagine an automation apocalypse that could ultimately throw millions of Americans out of work, talking about a national jobs guarantee program now is, at best, still wildly premature. Moreover, even if such a circumstance should occur, it’s far from settled that Americans would prefer a large-scale public jobs program over other strategies to manage economic disruption, including, heaven forfend, their own abilities to learn new skills and adapt to change.

#### The Freedom Caucus won’t budge; they think it’ll help them defeat Biden in 2024

Freking 2023

Kevin Freking is a politics reporter for the Associated Press. “Intensity and insults rise as lawmakers debate debt ceiling” published in the Associated Press on 3/31/23. (<https://apnews.com/article/biden-mccarthy-debt-ceiling-fight-47539399db37f44d47eff47386a28ddc>) - RK

Fights over increasing the nation’s borrowing authority have been contentious in Congress, yet follow a familiar pattern: Time and again, lawmakers found a way to step back from the brink before markets began to panic and the nation risked a dangerous default on its debt. But this year’s fight has a different feel, some lawmakers say. A new Republican majority in the House is itching for a spending showdown, and determined not to yield. They blame what they view as excessive federal spending for higher food and gasoline prices and the growing national debt. Led by Speaker Kevin McCarthy, they have ruled out passing a “clean” debt ceiling increase even as the White House insists such legislation be passed without conditions. It’s an impasse that shows no signs of easing ahead of this summer’s deadline for action. “Very worried. Very worried,” was how Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., a close McCarthy ally, described his outlook. “And frankly, I don’t see how we get there at this point. There’s no process set up, there’s no dialogue, there’s no discussion.” The political conditions are comparable to 2011, when a new Republican majority swept into power after a resounding election win and was determined to confront a Democratic White House and extract major spending cuts in return for a debt limit increase. To resolve that stalemate, Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed the Budget Control Act. The bill temporarily allowed borrowing to resume, set new spending limits and created a bipartisan “supercommittee” to recommend at least $1.2 trillion more in deficit reduction over 10 years. Republicans and Democrats on the panel failed to compromise, however, triggering automatic reductions in spending. But some damage was done. Standard & Poor’s Ratings Services downgraded U.S. debt for the first time that year because it lacked confidence political leaders would make the choices needed to avert a long-term fiscal crisis. In 2013, Obama took a different tack. He made clear early on there would be no negotiations on must-pass legislation to prevent a U.S. default, and he never wavered. A partial government shutdown, which began Oct. 1, swiftly coincided with the prospects of a default. On Oct. 16, Congress passed legislation to end the twin threats and GOP lawmakers who demanded to roll back Obama’s signature health care law got nothing for their efforts. “We fought the good fight. We just didn’t win,” conceded then-House Speaker John Boehner. Republicans say they are determined that Biden, who was Obama’s vice president during both of those debt ceiling battles, will have to follow the path set in 2011 — not the one set in 2013. “President Biden is not President Obama, right?” said Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., the leader of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus. “His poll numbers are in the tank and they’re going to keep going down.” The result, Perry said, is that Biden doesn’t have the political standing to ignore House Republicans. “Look, there’s gonna be shrapnel all around, right. Right?” Perry said. “Everybody might take some wounds from it, but he’s not walking out of this thing unscathed.” After a tumultuous start to the new Congress in which Republicans struggled to elect a speaker, they are taking great pains to show unity. Moderates and conservatives in the House are adamant: Biden must engage. “Any damage in Treasury markets and the bond market, to the economy, will fall at the feet of the president of the United States because he’s the one that started this entire saga saying he wanted no negotiations,” said Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla.

## Internal Links

#### Republicans will tank the September spending bill as backlash – they’ve already threatened the bill to enforce regressive financial policies

Karni et al., 07/25/23

Annie Karni is a congressional correspondent for The New York Times. She previously was a White House correspondent. Robert draper is a reporter for the New York Times. Luke Broadwater is a congressional reporter in the Washington bureau of The New York Times. "As Spending Fights Loom, Freedom Caucus Is at a Crossroads." Published by the New York Times on July 25, 2023. Available here: (https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/25/us/politics/majorie-taylor-green-freedom-caucus.html) - AP

As the Republican Party has moved further to the right, the fringe has become the mainstream, swelling the ranks of the Freedom Caucus but making it difficult for the group to stay aligned on policy and strategy. The rise of another hard-right faction in the House calling itself “the Twenty” — including some members of the caucus and some who have long refused to join — has raised questions in recent months about where the real power lies on the far right. The answer could help determine the outcome of a critical period of spending battles that begin in the House this week and could culminate in a government shutdown this fall, as ultraconservative lawmakers insist on funding cuts and social policy dictates that cannot clear Congress. As the hard right expands and fractures, its members are struggling to figure out how to exert their power and divided over how disruptive they want to be. On Tuesday, members of the group threatened to tank two spending bills that Mr. McCarthy is trying to push through the House this week before Congress leaves for its August break and show that House Republicans can move an austere spending blueprint on their own. “We should not fear a government shutdown,” said Representative Bob Good, Republican of Virginia. “Most of what we do up here is bad anyway.” Editors’ Picks Yes, Shaun Cassidy Is Still Dreamy The Persistent Confusion Around the U.T.I. We’re in the Era of the ‘Top Gun’ C.E.O. Image Representative Bob Good, flanked by other Freedom Caucus members, speaking to reporters in front of the Capitol. Members of the Freedom Caucus have threatened to tank two spending bills that Mr. McCarthy is trying to push through the House this week.Credit...Kenny Holston/The New York Times Representative Andy Biggs, Republican of Arizona, another member of the group, said he would not support a stopgap funding bill to keep the government running in the fall. But he said the Freedom Caucus had yet to decide whether to move to block such a measure from coming to the floor. “We’ll see how we strategize that later on,” Mr. Biggs said. Mr. Perry, who declined to discuss the details of what led the group to remove Ms. Greene, denied that the caucus was facing a crisis, arguing that its strength lay in its shared principles, not with any one member or unanimity on every issue.

## Impacts

#### Government shutdowns halt necessary programs, create food inequality and increased poverty

Rowland 23

Legislative Affairs Director for the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center. "Faqs about Government Shutdowns." Published by the Congressional Progressive Caucus Center, last updated July 21, 2023. Available here: (https://www.progressivecaucuscenter.org/faqs-about-government-shutdowns) - AP

1. Why does the government shut down? The government shuts down when Congress fails to pass legislation known as “appropriations” bills, which fund federal agencies like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and programs like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Appropriations bills typically fund the government through the end of each fiscal year (September 30). If a new appropriations bill has not been signed into law by that expiration date, Congress must pass a stopgap measure known as a “continuing resolution” (CR) to fund the government at current spending levels. For example, if a CR were to pass this year, it would fund the government at Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 levels. Without a new appropriations bill or a CR, the government shuts down. 2. Which government services and programs change during a shutdown and what impact does that have on the public? The extent to which a shutdown impacts federal programs and services varies. Congress has occasionally passed some of the 12 appropriations bills, allowing agencies and programs that those bills fund to remain functional while others shut down. This is called a “partial” government shutdown. However, if Congress does not pass any appropriations bills, all government functions halt with limited exceptions (see question 3 for a list of exceptions). Even a partial government shutdown has real human impacts. Below are numerous examples from the partial government shutdown between December 22, 2018, and January 25, 2019 (herein, the 2018-2019 shutdown): The Food and Drug Administration paused routine inspections, which endangered the public by allowing unsafe food or medical facilities to operate undetected. In the shutdown’s first weeks alone, the agency canceled more than 50 “high-risk” inspections, which typically involve food considered vulnerable to contamination like seafood, cheese, and vegetables. More than 86,000 immigration court hearings were canceled, delaying immigration proceedings for people who may have been waiting for their day in court for years and worsening an already substantial case backlog. The National Park Service stopped trash collection and road repairs, which allowed unsanitary conditions to fester and dangerous roads to remain in use, thus risking public safety. Some parks closed entirely, as did the Smithsonian museums, the National Zoo, and the National Gallery of Art, disrupting families’ travel plans and costing the government revenue it would otherwise collect from fees and souvenir and concession sales. In some states, the shutdown jeopardized cash assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The National Governors Association warned Congress nearly one month into the shutdown that although states had covered TANF costs up until that point, “states’ abilities to continue covering these costs may change based on caseload and enrollment. Payments to both individuals and families, in addition to support services funded by TANF, are at risk unless funding is restored.” Had the shutdown been longer, low-income families and children could have lost their cash assistance, pushing families further into poverty and taking away assistance that helps children’s short and long-term development. 3. Which government services and programs don’t change during a shutdown? Again, the exact services and programs a shutdown affects depend on whether the shutdown is total or partial. During a partial shutdown, some government agencies remain operational and continue providing services to the public. Certain government functions continue regardless of whether the agencies responsible for them shut down. A 1981 memo from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) referred to these activities as those related to “national security or the safety of life and property.” Activities that fall under this category include: inpatient hospital care and emergency outpatient medical care air traffic control law enforcement border security disaster aid power grid maintenance However, these activities may still experience disruptions. For example, during the 2018-2019 shutdown, air traffic controllers were forced to work without pay and began calling in sick in large numbers in protest. The resulting shortages caused major flight delays, and on January 25, 2019, New York’s La Guardia airport was closed to incoming planes entirely. Government activities that are not funded by annual appropriations bills also continue during a shutdown. This includes the U.S. Postal Service, which sustains its own operations through stamp sales, shipping costs, and more. This also includes permanently-funded programs, like Social Security and Medicare. Again, however, a shutdown may cause disruptions even as services continue. For example, during the FY 1996 shutdowns, although Social Security benefits remained funded, most Social Security Administration (SSA) staff were initially furloughed because appropriations from Congress fund their salaries. As a result, the agency did not have enough staff to respond to public inquiries or process address changes and new benefit claims. While SSA called back staff to fulfill these functions, the incident illustrates that even programs not subject to appropriations can suffer during a shutdown, forcing the public to grapple with issues like delayed benefits.

#### The Freedom caucus will leverage their power to pass a host of anti-LGBTQ+ and disrupt essential government programs

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Alice Ollstein is a healthcare reporter for Politico. “GOP looks to spending fights for wins on abortion, trans care, contraception” published in Politico on 07/24/2023. (<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/07/24/health-policy-bill-gop-00107455>) - RK

House Republicans’ food and agriculture spending bill would ban mail delivery of abortion pills and deregulate the tobacco industry. Their foreign operations bill would defund the World Health Organization. And multiple bills would bar access to gender-affirming care. Republicans, in coordination with outside conservative groups such as Susan B. Anthony List and the America First Policy Institute, are using must-pass appropriations bills to make their mark on a wide range of health policies, injecting culture wars into the already fraught debate over government spending and raising the chances of a government shutdown. “If it takes a rider on an appropriation bill or language in an appropriation bill to stop the federal funding for transgender therapy for minors, then maybe that’s what it will take,” appropriations committee member Rep. Andy Harris (R-Md.) told POLITICO. The perennial wrangling over abortion policy is no longer limited to Congress’ annual health care spending bill. This year, Republicans have tucked anti-abortion language into nearly every corner of the appropriations process, complicating the delicate negotiations as House leaders race to bring the first of a dozen bills to the floor before the August recess. House Democrats plan to fight the provisions wherever they can — including by forcing amendment votes in committee and on the floor that they acknowledge are likely to fail. “I’m going to keep offering amendments to highlight who they are,” Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), a senior appropriator who is also running for Senate, told POLITICO. “People need to know who is on their side and who isn’t.” The White House on Monday threatened to veto the GOP spending bills for the FDA, Agriculture and Veterans Affairs departments over the legislations’ deep funding cuts and “partisan policy provisions with devastating consequences including harming access to reproductive healthcare.” For now, Democrats are largely counting on the Senate to act as a “firewall” against the House health proposals, setting up a clash in the coming months when the two chambers must reconcile their differences. But some in the party fear they may be forced to compromise to keep the government open because of the sheer number of riders Republicans are attaching to the spending bills. In the Senate, Appropriations Chair Patty Murray (D-Wash.) said House attempts to insert riders into the spending bills “will not fly” in her committee and Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), another member of the panel, told POLITICO, “we’re going to ignore it.” “Anything that’s partisan won’t be enacted,” Schatz said. “So they can do whatever they want, but we are the only bipartisan game in town.” Several House Democrats voiced confidence in the Senate serving as a bulwark against the abortion and other health provisions becoming law — citing the upper chamber’s recent success in voting eight out of 12 spending bills out of committee with the support of Republicans and without the new abortion riders. Still, with a group of hardline Republicans threatening to tank the spending bills if they don’t get their way, some Democrats remain nervous. Food and Agriculture spending bill The bill allocates roughly $25 billion to fund a vast array of programs supporting farmers, feeding lower income children and families, and regulating food and drug companies 🤔 HITCHING A RIDE ON THE BILL ARE PROVISIONS THAT... 🛑 Stop the U.S. Food and Drug Administration from proposing a rule to reduce nicotine levels in cigarettes to make them less addictive. ⛔ Eliminate the FDA’s 2021 policy allowing the distribution of abortion pills by mail. 🛑 Stop the FDA from using any taxpayer funds to prohibit the sale of menthol cigarettes or flavored cigars. 👉 Order the FDA not to block the use of medical devices that have been approved by a court — a policy that comes as a legal battle in Massachusetts challenges the FDA’s authority to ban the use of an electroshock device on disabled people. Rep. Norma Torres (D-Calif.) fears the more budget riders the House GOP pushes through, the more leverage it’ll have, and said Democrats have not reached a consensus on what they’re willing to accept. “Our caucus is having a very difficult time,” she said — torn between a desire to avoid a shutdown and stopping what they consider an “extreme agenda” from becoming law. “We’ll see where we land on that, but that’s definitely a debate within our own caucus,” she said. “But we have to wake up to the reality that we are in. Whether our Democrats in the Senate block all of these ill-conceived riders, this is going to be part of the negotiations that will take place sometime this year on every single one of the 12 bills.” Leaders on both sides have long fought to keep partisan rancor out of the appropriations process — with varying degrees of success. For decades, Democrats and Republicans have been locked in a stalemate, even when one party controlled both chambers. But after a half-century streak of relative stability, with Congress repeatedly extending the same handful of restrictions on federal funding for abortion, Republicans are going on offense. “We’ve long had a detente where the Republicans agree not to add any new riders if the Democrats agree not to take any out,” said Erika Sward, the assistant vice president of national advocacy for the non-partisan American Lung Association — one of many health advocacy groups tracking the negotiations. “But now we’re seeing an attempt from House Republicans to add more than 100 more riders in addition to keeping in place what we refer to as the ‘legacy riders.’ And a lot of these we see as bad policies that jeopardize our nation’s health.” Republicans’ financial services bill, for instance, includes riders barring federal workers’ health insurance from covering abortion, and blocking Washington, D.C., from using its own money to support abortion services. And their Veterans Affairs bill would end a Biden administration policy that makes abortion available to some beneficiaries even in states that ban the procedure. GOP members leading the charge insist the moves are an appropriate response to the Biden administration’s efforts to protect and expand abortion rights post-Roe v. Wade through agency rules and executive actions, including support for military members’ travel to states where abortion is legal and the elimination of some Trump-era restrictions on foreign aid to organizations that counsel patients on abortion. “They’re the ones that have changed the game and the rules of the game, not us,” Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), the vice chair of the Appropriations Committee, told POLITICO. “It’s very unwise when the military, without thinking through the implications of this, implemented its policies.” Financial Services and General Government spending bill The bill allocates roughly $70 billion for bank regulators, consumer protection agencies, the Internal Revenue Service, and the District of Columbia. 🤔 HITCHING A RIDE ON THE BILL ARE PROVISIONS THAT... ❌ Prohibit the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program from covering abortion and gender-affirming care. ❌ Prohibit Washington, D.C., from using federal funds or its own local funds for either abortion or needle-exchange programs. 👈 Repeals DC's "Death with Dignity Act" that allows terminally ill patients to seek medically-assisted suicide. ❌ Blocks funding for the implementation of D.C.'s Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Act, which bars employers from basing hiring or promotion decisions on a worker's abortion history. Conservative groups working with House Republicans are also urging members to push for a range of international and domestic policy changes in the spending bills — from World Health Organization funding to vaccine mandate — stressing that it’s their best and possibly only chance of getting the measures through. “You use the tools you have,” said Drew Keyes, a senior policy analyst with the Paragon Health Institute. “It’s a constitutional duty.” Tensions erupted this week when GOP appropriators moved to strip earmarked funding from the transportation and housing bill for three LGBT community centers that provide mental health and substance abuse services. The usually staid and wonky hearing devolved into a cacophony of swearing and shouting, and leaders had to recess multiple times. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.), the ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee, compared working with her GOP colleagues to “negotiating with terrorists,” though she later agreed to have those remarks stricken from the record, while other Democrats decried the Republican moves as “disgusting and ugly bigotry.” The uptick in riders is a sign of how hardliners have gained outsized influence in the narrow House GOP majority, giving Freedom Caucus members intent on slashing spending and advancing abortion restrictions key committee roles and forcing GOP leadership to accommodate their demands. “Any one of the Republicans can call for a speaker vote, so the extreme part of the party has taken over everything,” Torres said. “Their talking points are no longer talking points. They are actually becoming riders and amendments.” Cole and other Republicans who have lived through decades of spending fights admit that most of these riders won’t make it to President Joe Biden’s desk. “It doesn’t become law if it doesn’t become bipartisan someplace along in the process, and each side’s figured that out,” Cole said. “There was a Democratic effort to overreach and get rid of the Hyde Amendment, but they weren’t able to move any Republicans, so they haven’t been able to make any progress there. And we’ll have the same kinds of issues now.” Still, several influential anti-abortion, advocacy and former President Donald Trump and former Vice President Mike Pence affiliated groups, including Advancing American Freedom and the National Right to Life Committee, are cheering House Republicans’ efforts to reshape social policy via Congress’ power of the purse, urging them to “continue to promote and protect policies that defend unborn children and their mothers from the brutality of abortion.” Labor, Education and Health spending bill The spending package allocates roughly $147 billion for schools, scholarships, workplace safety programs, public health departments, and scientific research. 🤔 HITCHING A RIDE ON THE BILL ARE PROVISIONS THAT... ❌ Prohibit the National Institutes of Health from using fetal tissue obtained from an elective abortion for medical research. ❌ Bar Planned Parenthood from participating in any federally funded health program. ⛔ Eliminate funding for the Title X family planning program. ⛔ Eliminate funding for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. ⛔ Eliminate funding for the Ending the HIV Epidemic program. 🛑 Ban Medicaid from covering abortion. 🛑 Ban funding for any hotline or website run by the HHS that provides information on where to obtain an abortion. ❌ Block all federal funds for gender affirming care. “We look forward to working with you to defend these provisions as the bills continue through the appropriations process,” they wrote to top appropriators earlier this month. Kristi Hamrick, the chief policy strategist with Students for Life, said the letter is part of a bigger pressure campaign aimed at encouraging Republicans supportive of anti-abortion riders and confronting those uncomfortable with them. “This goes to the core of our argument against people who say abortion should just be a state issue,” she said. “It’s already a federal issue. The federal government is already involved in abortion. So if you really believe it should be entirely up to states to decide, you should support these defunding measures.” Some of the riders, however, go too far for some moderate Republicans, particularly those from districts that voted for Biden. And with Republicans only able to lose four votes on each bill, even a small defection could put passage in jeopardy. Rep. Marc Molinaro (R-N.Y.) announced his opposition this week to the provision in the Agriculture and FDA spending bill banning mail delivery of abortion pills, saying in a statement to POLITICO that if it remains in the bill when it comes to the House floor, “I cannot support it and will vote no.” Democratic groups repeatedly hit Molinaro on abortion during his reelection campaign in 2022, running ads accusing him of siding with Republicans who favor a national ban. Molinaro, who at the time sent letters to TV stations demanding they stop airing the ads and touted his record supporting abortion rights, narrowly won, helping Republicans win control of the House. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), the former chair of the Democratic National Committee, said the party won’t hesitate to use the upcoming votes in a similar way to squeeze frontline Republicans in 2024. “If Republicans think they’re going to win the presidency and keep the majority in the House on culture wars, particularly on the backs of women and their reproductive rights, they’re living on another planet,” she said. “Republicans are clearly tone deaf and not listening to women and families and I think they’ll be in electoral peril as a result.”