

Dwindling Money for Nonprofits in FY2012 Budget Appropriations

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... Time for a Continuing Resolution

Remember why it seemed so odd to have no approved FY2011 budget earlier this year? The explanations for it vary, but the end result was that until the government-shutdown showdown in the spring, the FY2011 budget was actually a continuing-resolution extension of the FY2010 numbers. It appears that House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) is looking at offering a continuing resolution on the FY2012 budget to keep government offices up and operating through November 18.

Apparently an "omnibus" budget bill will emerge during this time that replaces a dozen or so separate spending bills that are supposed to comprise the fiscal year budget. An omnibus bill would supplant the multiple appropriations decisions of the House and Senate appropriations committees. Why an omnibus? At this point, the House has only approved half of the required spending bills, and no debate on appropriations is on the schedule for the remainder of the fall, per House Speaker Boehner.

The omnibus budget bill would not only circumvent the regular appropriations process, but also Boehner's Tea-Party *bêtes noires*, by bypassing specific debates on appropriations bills in favor of finding "one big bill" consistent with the Budget Control Act (the deficit reduction legislation born of August's debt-ceiling standoff) which would cap FY2012 discretionary spending at a little over \$1 trillion.

It is a complicated *mélange* of appropriations activity—House and Senate decision-making sometimes miles apart, some elements of the appropriations process missing altogether, and the likelihood that all might be for naught as a continuing resolution and an omnibus bill supplant all of this folderol. In all of this, where is the nonprofit sector? It is time for another nonprofit agenda like the one put together by OMB Watch and the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy for the incoming Bush-or-Gore administration in 2000, that would lay out what the nonprofit sector writ large wants and needs to see in a FY2012 budget, so that the needs of our society can be met at this critical economic juncture.

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