



Legislative Proposals

Offset emergency spending

The Responsible Budget Targets Act introduced by Rep. Emmer (R-MN) and Sen. Braun (R-IN) ([H.R.7420](#) and [S.772](#), respectively) implements offsets over a six-year period. Establishing an offsetting mechanism gives appropriators the flexibility to address emergencies when necessary while also incentivizing forward-thinking budget planning.

Raise emergency spending voting thresholds

In 2019, Rep. Walker (R-NC) and Sen. Romney (R-UT) introduced the Budgeting for Disasters Act ([H.R.3217](#) and [S.1579](#), respectively) which proposed increasing the number of votes required to waive the Senate point of order against an emergency designation from three-fifths to two-thirds. A well-crafted balanced budget amendment, like those proposed by Sen. Braun (R-IN), Rep. Moran (R-TX), and Rep. Arrington (R-TX), would also set a consistent and enforceable two-thirds supermajority for emergency spending. Raising this voting threshold would be a step forward in deterring the use of emergency funds for non-emergency priorities.

End executive emergency declarations after 30 days

The ARTICLE ONE Act introduced by Rep. Roy (R-TX) and Sen. Lee (R-UT) ([H.R.3988](#) and [S.1912](#), respectively) reigns in excessive emergency powers by restricting presidential emergency declarations to 30 days unless reauthorized by Congress. Creating a “shot clock” where emergency declarations automatically expire unless extended by Congress would limit costly executive overreach and challenge our never-ending state of emergency.

Enhance transparency over executive emergency spending

The National Emergency Expenditure (NEA) Reporting Transparency Act introduced by Rep. Gosar (R-AZ) and Sen. Marshall (R-KS) ([H.R.4615](#) and [S.2300](#), respectively) takes a big step in the right direction by amending the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act to include NEA reports. The public and concerned legislators deserve to know how the executive expends taxpayer dollars during emergencies.

Correct the budget baseline distortion

The Stop the Baseline Bloat Act ([H.R.8068](#)), recently introduced by Congressmen Grothman (R-WI) and Case (D-HI), strikes emergency spending from the budget baseline. Treating temporary emergency provisions as permanent and growing expenditures creates an insidious ratcheting effect, baking in a bias towards higher spending.

Other opportunities for Congressional leadership

- Require appropriators to justify emergency designations
 - Congress should require any legislation with emergency funding to include a findings section that describes how each emergency designation is necessary, sudden, urgent, unforeseen, and nonpermanent.
- Mandate regular reporting on emergency spending
 - Emergency spending makes up an increasing share of the overall budget, but no regular, comprehensive reporting exists on emergency designations year-over-year. Nonpartisan legislative agencies could fill this informational gap.