



House and Senate Pass COVID-19 Budget Resolution

Overview

Early Friday morning, the U.S. Senate adopted an FY 2021 budget resolution (S. Con. Res. 5) that gives Democratic leaders an option for advancing a COVID-19 relief package with only a simple majority in the upper chamber. The Senate resolution incorporates language from the House's version (H. Con. Res. 11) and includes reconciliation instructions and budget enforcement provisions for both chambers. The resolution directs 11 Senate committees and 12 House committees to produce legislation that would increase the deficit by as much as \$1.9 trillion over 10 years.

The 2021 budget resolution is not a comprehensive fiscal blueprint for the next 10 years. It is designed solely to provide the option of using reconciliation to deliver relief and achieve the goals of President Biden's [American Rescue Plan](#). Once the reconciliation bill becomes law, Congress will begin its work on a forward-looking, comprehensive budget resolution for 2022.

Votes, Amendments, and Next Steps

The Senate adopted the budget resolution on February 5 by a 51-50 vote, with Vice President Harris breaking the tie. The vote came after an all-night session during which senators approved dozens of amendments in a process known as "vote-a-rama." Notably, the chamber adopted, by a vote of 99-1, to strengthen the Provider Relief Fund for COVID-19 health-care providers. A full list of the adopted amendments can be found below.

On February 3, the House adopted H. Con. Res. 11 by a vote of 218-212, with two Democrats voting no. The House is scheduled to consider the Senate's resolution on February 5, under terms of floor debate set by the Rules Committee. A simple majority would be needed. Holding a vote on the Senate version would complete action on the budget resolution, which is an internal document that isn't presented to the president. House and Senate committees would then move forward on their reconciliation legislation.

The Budget Resolution

The resolution directs 11 Senate committees to report legislation by Feb. 16 that would increase the deficit by as much as the following amounts from FY 2021 through FY 2030:



Senate Committee	Deficit Increase
Finance	\$1,296.5B
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions	305.0
Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs	89.3
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs	50.7
Small Business and Entrepreneurship	50.0
Commerce, Science, and Transportation	35.9
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry	22.7
Veterans' Affairs	17.0
Foreign Relations	10.0
Indian Affairs	8.6
Environment and Public Works	3.2

12 House committees will have to report legislation by the same date with the following deficit increases:

House Committee	Deficit Increase
Ways and Means	\$940.7B
Education and Labor	357.9
Oversight and Reform	350.7
Energy and Commerce	188.5
Transportation and Infrastructure	95.6
Financial Services	75.0
Small Business	50.0
Veterans' Affairs	17.0
Agriculture	16.1
Foreign Affairs	10.0
Natural Resources	1.0
Science, Space, and Technology	0.8

After receiving the committee legislation on or before Feb. 16, the Senate and House Budget committees will then package their reconciliation legislation and send it to the full chambers without substantive revision.

The Reconciliation Bill

Though the resolution doesn't specify what the resulting reconciliation bill would contain, the document from Sanders specifies that the measure could include Covid-19 relief provisions, many drawn from the [president's plan](#), such as:

- \$2,000 in additional direct payments to individuals.
- An increased federal minimum wage.
- \$400 a week in pandemic-related unemployment aid.



- \$350 billion in state and local aid.
- Expanded child and earned income tax credits.
- Funding for Covid-19 vaccine distribution.
- Funding to support childcare centers.
- Housing, homelessness, and nutrition aid.
- Investments in broadband, public transit, and other infrastructure.

The list departs from one release for the House bill, which refers to \$1,400 payments and omits reference to the minimum wage increase.

Additional Reserve Funds

Passage of the budget resolution came just after 5:30 a.m. Friday, after an all-night Senate session during which senators approved dozens of amendments in a chaotic process known as a “vote-a-rama.” Under Senate rules, the amendments take the form of reserve funds, provisions that allow the House and Senate Budget chairs to adjust budgetary levels in the resolution to reflect changes resulting from legislation. The provisions are nonbinding, though they show how lawmakers are likely to vote on an issue.

During floor debate, the Senate adopted amendments adding deficit-neutral reserve funds to cover legislation that would:

Health Amendments

- Strengthen the Provider Relief Fund for Covid-19 health-care providers, including additional support for rural hospitals (adopted 99-1).
- Promote a coronavirus vaccine awareness campaign (adopted 100-0).
- Provide information online showing the expenditure of Covid-19 relief funds (adopted by voice vote).
- Expand health savings accounts (adopted 53-47).
- Improve services related to sexual assault and family violence (adopted 100-0).

Other Amendments

- Ensure “upper-income taxpayers” — a term that isn’t defined — don’t qualify for economic stimulus payments (adopted 99-1).
- Prohibit a federal minimum wage increase during the pandemic (adopted by voice vote).
- Provide grants to food and drinking establishments affected by Covid-19 (adopted 90-10).
- Prevent tax increases on small businesses during a pandemic (adopted 100-0).
- Limit the authority of states to tax the income of employees working in other states (adopted by voice vote).



- Provide support to hospitality and entertainment industries (adopted by voice vote).
- Adjust federal relief funds, including Covid-19 payments, made to states and localities that impose greater speech limits on 501(c)(3) religious groups compared with tax-exempt secular groups (adopted 51-49).
- Aid schools in states that have lost oil and gas revenue due to the federal moratorium on leasing (adopted 98-2).
- Preserve the Trump administration's rewrite of the Waters of the U.S. rule that defines federally protected water bodies and wetlands (adopted 51-49).
- Maintain the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem (adopted 97-3).
- Bar actions that would cause the U.S. to import larger quantities of oil, gas, or hardrock minerals from countries with weaker environmental or labor standards (adopted by voice vote).
- Fund police-related programs run by various agencies, including those related to officer safety, anti-terrorism fusion centers, and mental and behavioral health (adopted 100-0).
- Develop recommendations to improve the solvency of federal trust funds (adopted 71-29).

Before the vote to adopt the resolution, the Senate also voted 51-50, with the vice president's tie-breaking vote, to strip out amendments adopted earlier in debate that would have barred stimulus checks for undocumented immigrants, supported the Keystone XL pipeline, and opposed a ban on fracking.