



## U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*PRESS RELEASE*

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**NOTE TO ASSIGNMENT EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS:** Senator Mikulski's remarks on the Senate floor are available for broadcast quality download.

*Audio of Senator Mikulski's remarks is available – [here](#).*

*Video of Senator Mikulski's remarks is available – [here](#).*

### **CHAIRWOMAN MIKULSKI'S FLOOR STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF BIPARTISAN BUDGET AGREEMENT**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.), Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, released the following statement in support of the bipartisan budget agreement reached by Budget Committee Chairmen Patty Murray and Paul Ryan:

**“Mr. President, I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to support the bipartisan budget agreement. I want to congratulate our colleagues, especially Budget Committee Chairwoman Murray, for her outstanding leadership in forging this bipartisan agreement with her House counterpart, Mr. Ryan. She reached this agreement in a way that is indeed a compromise. Not everyone's desired outcome, but a fair and necessary one. I urge my colleagues to support it. I think it's fantastic that they actually got a budget done. This is the first time in several years that we're actually going to vote on a bipartisan budget conference agreement, and I think it bodes well for future activity where we return to the due order of passing legislation—one bill in each house, a conference committee to hammer out the disagreements, and then back to the Floor for final agreement.**

**“What I like about this agreement is that it creates certainty by avoiding sequester for two years, and gives the topline funding to the Appropriations Committee for 2014 and 2015. Many people do not realize that we on the Appropriations Committee, who actually put money in the federal checkbook for spending, have a cap put on our spending by the Budget Committee. That's called the 302(a) or the topline. We have not been able to do our**

**Appropriations Committee duties because we haven't had a top line. This agreement enables us to have one for 2014. We are under a mandate to pass a government funding measure for fiscal year 2014 by January 15. We will meet that deadline. It's going to be tough, it's going to be stringent, but we're going to get the job done. It also gives us certainty for 2015 so we can return to a regular order of actually knowing where we stand with our cap, holding our hearings, and bringing bills to the Committee.**

**“The other thing that I like about this agreement—this bipartisan budget agreement—is it prevents harm. It protects seniors and families. It preserves the social safety net like Medicare and Social Security.**

**“And finally, the agreement ends gridlock. The American people are tired of shutdowns, slowdown, slamdown politics. This ends the lurching from crisis to crisis and shows that we can compromise and govern.**

**“First of all, and foremost, this budget agreement creates certainty for America's businesses and families. By avoiding sequester for two years, it prevents further across-the-board cuts—not that we don't need strategic cuts, and welcome them in the Appropriations Committee—but it prevents across-the-board cuts regardless of whether a program works or a program is dysfunctional. This way we can actually look at those programs that we do need to cut, those that are dated, those that are duplicative, those that are dysfunctional. Sure, let's cut those. But, at the same time, let's keep the good programs and make sure that they are adequately funded. I believe avoiding sequester and the meat-ax approach to cuts really helps us have better governance. We will have a more frugal government but a more sensible way of spending.**

**“It also gives us this topline funding for 2014 and 2015 to the Appropriations Committee. It means that we can write an omnibus bill for the rest of fiscal year 2014. And I hope it's a bus that really moves.**

**“It will enable us to make smart choices about investments in America instead of government on auto pilot through a continuing funding resolution. This agreement saves America from lurching from one continuing funding resolution to another. And it's a fair compromise. For 2014, it's \$45 billion above the House proposed budget, and it's \$45 billion below the Senate proposed budget. Our budget leadership met in the middle and really saw that would be an adequate compromise. I would have preferred the \$1.058 trillion level, but it's adequate. The bipartisan agreement also, as I said, prevents harm to the middle class.**

**“What I think America is looking for, though, is not only numbers of programs and so on. They want us to get our act together. They want to us really do our job and do it in a way that's sensible and civil. And I believe that that's what was done in the Budget Committee. They want us to work together across the aisle and across the dome. This bipartisan**

**agreement shows what can be done when we do meet in the middle to make progress for the middle class and for those people who are neither right or left, but want to take the middle of the road. Now this compromise is not perfect, and compromises never are. For me, some of the pay-fors were not exactly what I was happy about.**

**“For example, it requires new federal employees to pay more for their retirement and working-age military retirees to receive smaller COLAs. I would have preferred an agreement that closed tax loopholes or canceled some of those out-of-date farm subsidies left over from the 1930's. However, by avoiding sequester, we also will be able to avoid furloughs.**

**“If you talk to the civilian employees at Defense and you talk to the federal employees in the domestic agencies, this whole idea of furloughs and sequesters, some of them have had a double furlough. Like at the FBI. We were facing furloughs at the FBI. We didn't have gas for the FBI cars. That's just not right.**

**“We want to make sure we continue to fund our government and meet our responsibility. I cannot stress enough how important this bipartisan agreement is. If we continued the path that we were on and if sequester was left in place it would cost our economy 800,000 jobs. In one year, 800,000 jobs. Maryland already lost 21,000 jobs because of sequester. We have important federal agencies. We have over 250,000 contractors both in defense and civil agencies and the ripple effect through our state of its impact on institutions like Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, flagship companies like Lockheed Martin, was really significant.**

**“So by passing this, we have certainty that enables us to keep those jobs. The Appropriations Committee is ready to write a funding bill that will create jobs today and jobs tomorrow through important investments in infrastructure, education, and research and development. Let's take this bipartisan agreement, and we will produce a bill. We on the Appropriations Committee will produce a bill that meets our national security needs, our compelling human needs and at the same time lay the groundwork for a more prosperous America. So I urge my colleagues to support this bill and get rid of gridlock and deadlock and make sure we have certainty and reliability in funding the government of the United States of America.”**

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