



Rand Paul presents budget resolution on Senate floor

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June 16th, 2022

WASHINGTON — Sen. Rand Paul, R-KY., proposed an aggressive plan to balance the federal budget in just five years. He has proposed several similar plans in the past, none of them receiving enough support to move forward. The federal deficit has gotten bigger over that time, and now Paul is presented with his biggest proposed cuts yet.

Paul calls it the “Six Penny Plan.” Simply put, it would cut 6 cents from every dollar of federal spending.

“Both parties were involved with making the spending worse,” Paul said in an interview with Spectrum News.

This concept is one Paul has presented multiple times before. In 2018, Paul presented a plan that would cut one penny per dollar.

He now says, “We are now in a situation that a simple penny, two, three, or even five pennies per-dollar reduction is insufficient to balance our budget. It requires six.”

“Not every program is equal and some programs can take a 1% cut and won’t affect them,” explained Mark Harkins with the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University. “Others, a 1% cut, would totally abandon their ability to do what they need to get done.”

Harkins said a plan like this offers a lot of challenges politically.

The “5 Penny Plan” Paul presented in 2021 received no support from Democrats and only 28 of the 50 Republicans wanted to move it forward.

“It’s really difficult for members to go home and say ‘Hey! I balanced the budget. You’re going to get less services but it’s going to be better in the long run,’” Harkins said.

“The only reason I’ll get a vote on my budget is because they failed to produce a budget,” Paul said. “I think it’s irresponsible for a government.”

Precedent holds that if the Senate Budget Committee cannot present its own resolution by April 1, any senator can produce one. That is why Paul had the chance to present his plan on the Senate floor.

Paul's plan calls for 6% cuts across the board, excluding social security. Those cuts would slash billions from groups like medicare and medicaid, the Department of Defense and programs run by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Chris Edwards is a federal spending expert at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank that favors limited government, said he doesn't think it's realistic for Congress to pass a plan like this right now, but he added he thinks finding a clear way to address the nation's \$30 trillion in federal debt is crucial.

"The leadership of neither party is taking deficits and debt seriously," Edwards said. "We are headed for a financial crisis unless Washington starts to control these budget deficits."

The Senate voted not to proceed on Paul's "Six Penny Plan" by a vote of 29 - 67.