



Dennis Ross says he's "inclined to support" Ryan-Murray budget deal

By [Mitch Perry](#)

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Polk/Hillsborough County Republican Congressman Dennis Ross said tonight he's "inclined" to support the \$85 billion compromise deal forged between Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and Senate Budget Committee Chairman Patty Murray (D-Wash.) that would fund federal agencies through the fall of 2015.

The deal has been criticized by many conservatives (as well as some liberals), and Ross admitted during a telephone town hall meeting Wednesday night that it's certainly not an ideal plan, but said that Congress cannot keep on passing continuing resolutions every three to four months, and admitted that the government shutdown in October led by his colleagues in House was a disaster.

"The last government shutdown cost us \$24 billion," he said. "The threat of a government shutdown leads to panic, leads to chaos and bad legislation."

The House is scheduled to vote on the deal on Thursday, a day before they are scheduled to leave the capital for the rest of the year. The Senate is scheduled to vote on the matter next week.

Conservative and Libertarian organizations have blasted the deal. The Cato Institute calls it a "huge Republican cave-in." Tea Party favorites like Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz have also criticized the deal, which reworks the sequester, which members from both parties wanted to do.

The plan calls for spending for the Pentagon and other federal agencies to be set at \$1.012 trillion for fiscal 2014, which the Washington Post [reports](#) is midway between the \$1.058 trillion sought by Democrats and the \$967 billion championed by Republicans. The Pentagon would get a \$2 billion increase over last year, while domestic agencies would get a \$22 billion bump, clearing space for administration priorities such as fresh investments in education and infrastructure.

For fiscal 2015, spending would increase only slightly, to \$1.014 trillion, for a total of \$63 billion in sequester replacement.

That cost would be covered through a mix of policies to be implemented over the next decade. They include \$12.6 billion in higher security fees for airline passengers, \$8 billion in higher premiums for federal insurance for private pensions, \$6 billion in reduced payments to student-loan debt collectors and \$3 billion saved by not completely refilling the nation's strategic petroleum reserves.

Ross says that the deal is not something he would have conceived. "It doesn't give me great relief, but it moves us in a step in the right direction," he said, adding that it shows Congress can get something done.

Regarding other issues, the CD15 Representative agreed with a caller who said it he wanted U.S. troops to pull out of Afghanistan, saying "It's time to bring our boys and women home."

But Ross remained silent when a woman identifying herself from Tampa said that the reason that President Obama wants to cut defense spending because "He doesn't want to fight the Muslims," adding, "I know he's Muslim."