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Boehner can't win enough support from House GOP to pass debt bill

Fri, 07/29/2011 - 10:05am | posted by Jason Pye

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There's no denying that House Republican leaders, specifically Speaker John Boehner, looked bad yesterday as they were forced to pull their bill off the floor due to a lack of votes from tea party-backed caucus members; though it looks like they'll try again today:

House Republican leaders have postponed indefinitely a vote on Speaker John Boehner's (R-Ohio) debt-limit bill after they could not persuade enough Republicans to support the measure.

"No vote tonight," the third-ranking House Republican, Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (Calif.), told reporters after leaving Boehner's office shortly before 10:30 p.m.

[...]

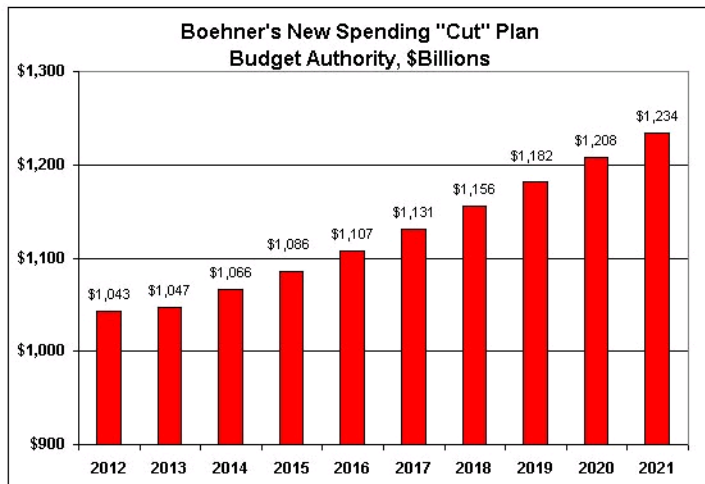
The Rules Committee will convene at 11 p.m. to pass a rule allowing them to work on the bill tomorrow.

GOP leaders announced the postponement after a day and evening of arm-twisting in which they worked to convince reluctant lawmakers to support Boehner's measure to raise the debt ceiling by \$900 billion and cut deficits by \$917 billion over the next decade.

Boehner needs 216 votes to pass his bill, meaning that he cannot have more than 24 Republicans vote against the proposal. There are 25 currently on record opposing the proposal, including Michele Bachmann and Ron Paul.

The reasoning for not supporting the bill is understandable. Chris Edwards, an economist at the Cato Institute, noted that the plan ostensibly doesn't cut spending:

[T]he revised Boehner plan doesn't cut spending at all. The chart shows the discretionary spending caps in the new Boehner plan. Spending increases every year—from \$1.043 trillion in 2012 to \$1.234 trillion in 2021. (These figures exclude the costs of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan).



The "cuts" in the Boehner plan are only cuts from the CBO baseline, which is an assumed path of constantly rising spending. If Congress wanted to, it could require CBO to increase its "baseline" spending by, say, \$5 trillion over the next decade. Then Boehner could claim that he

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was "cutting" spending by \$5.9 trillion, even though his plan hadn't changed. You can see that discretionary "cuts" against baselines don't mean anything.

House Democrats spent the day slamming the plan by resorting to the usual scare tactics, including a blatantly dishonest claim by Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi that it [would take Medicare away from seniors](#). The White House also lobbed an absurd bomb that Boehner essentially wants to ruin Christmas; nevermind that the Senate [passed ObamaCare](#), an unpopular measure, and [raised the debt ceiling](#) on Christmas Eve in 2009

Senate Democrats, who are [pushing another possible compromise](#), plan to [bring Boehner's proposal forward for a vote](#) and kill it as soon as it clears the House.

We'll have an update later today if there is movement on the bill in the House.

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