

## Sequestration battle plays out on Twitter

By: Katie Glueck February 26, 2013

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Her tweet is one of many from congressional Republicans demanding to “cut waste” — a message that comes days before the Friday deadline for a deal to prevent the automatic, across-the-board spending cuts that will target both defense and domestic priorities if they kick in. Some Republicans have argued that any deal to fend off the sequester must include significant spending cuts rather than revenue raisers, while Democrats — including President Barack Obama — advocate closing tax loopholes as part of a deal, a demand at which leading Republicans have balked.

“Instead of raising taxes again why not #CutWaste, like the \$1.7 billion spent to keep up federal properties that are barely used, if at all,” tweeted House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, using the same hash tag.

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) prefers another hash tag: #sequesterthis, through which he identifies his own recommendations for slashing government waste.

“#SequesterThis WH says OK will lose \$339K in job training but OK has 45 duplicative programs ran by 40 groups @ \$164M,” read one tweet from Tuesday morning,

Veronique de Rugy at National Review downplayed the impacts of the sequester and, citing analysis from the libertarian-leaning Cato Institute, added, “it is unfortunate that so few of the cuts will fall on the part of the budget that is actually responsible for the largest share of the spending and is also the driver of our future debt: entitlement programs, such as Medicare.”

Alex Conant, spokesman for Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), tweeted a link to a graph that showed federal spending would decrease only minimally as a result of sequestration.

“This graph does a great job showing why the sequester is dumb, and why we need entitlement reform,” he offered.

But as the right hammers home spending arguments, the left is focused on slamming Republicans over their negotiating posture —and in the process, hitting the GOP which is most likely to shoulder the blame if sequestration happens, a Pew Research Center poll found on Tuesday.

“The Republicans know the partial shutdown of services is going to hurt—a lot,” read a post at DailyKos.com. “They also know they’re going to be blamed for it, no matter what little Twitter hashtags they deploy to the contrary...”

“...The problem for Republicans, however, is that they’ve premised nearly all of their obsessive anti-Obama rhetoric around the notions that (1) the government can’t create jobs, (2) all government is bad, and (3) the scary deficit monster is going to kill us all,” the post continued sarcastically.

“Just submitted (for 3rd time) Dem plan to #StopTheSequester. The American ppl want a balanced approach - they deserve a vote,” tweeted Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), the ranking member on the House Budget Committee, on Monday — using the phrase “balanced approach” to reference the administration’s call for both spending cuts and closing tax loopholes.

Jonathan Bernstein, writing at the Washington Post’s liberal blog, Plum Line, argued that Republicans seem to be forgetting that elections have consequences — and that their party lost.

“Reaching a deal to avert the sequester was always going to be difficult, but if Republicans don’t acknowledge that things have changed since last year, it’s going to be even harder,” Bernstein wrote. He added, “...we should expect a negotiated outcome to tilt a fair ways towards the Dem position compared to before the election. But if Republicans are proceeding from the assumption that none of this ever happened — and are going to act as if they can get what they want just as easily as in 2011 — then compromise will only be more elusive.”

“GOP gives new meaning to “March Madness,” once again leading our country to brink of manufactured crisis,” tweeted Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), using a favorite hashtag among Democrats: “#StoptheSequester.”