
Subject: In Reversal, House G.O.P. Agrees to Lift Debt Limit

Posted by [CyberkNight](#) on Mon, 21 Jan 2013 15:29:59 GMT

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Backing down from their hard-line stance, House Republicans said Friday that they would agree to lift the federal government's statutory borrowing limit for three months, with a requirement that both chambers of Congress pass a budget in that time to clear the way for negotiations on long-term deficit reduction.

The new proposal, which came out of closed-door party negotiations at a retreat in Williamsburg, Va., seemed to significantly reduce the threat of a default by the federal government in coming weeks. The White House press secretary, Jay Carney, said he was encouraged by the offer; Senate Democrats, while bristling at the demand for a budget, were also reassured and viewed it as a de-escalation of the debt fight.

The change in tack represented a retreat for House Republicans, who were increasingly isolated in their refusal to lift the debt ceiling. Speaker John A. Boehner of Ohio had previously said he would raise it only if it were paired with immediate spending cuts of equivalent value. The new strategy is designed to start a more orderly negotiation with President Obama and Senate Democrats on ways to shrink the trillion-dollar deficit.

To add muscle to their efforts to bring Senate Democrats to the table, House Republicans will include a provision in the debt ceiling legislation that says lawmakers will not be paid if they do not pass a budget blueprint, though questions have been raised whether that provision is constitutional.

That "no budget, no pay" provision offered Republicans a face-saving way out of a corner they had painted themselves into -- and an effort to shift blame for any default onto the Senate if it balks. The House Republicans' campaign arm quickly moved from taunting Democrats about raising the government's borrowing limit to demanding that they sacrifice their paychecks if they fail to pass a budget.

"The Democratic-controlled Senate has failed to pass a budget for four years. That is a shameful run that needs to end, this year," Mr. Boehner said in a statement from Williamsburg. "We are going to pursue strategies that will obligate the Senate to finally join the House in confronting the government's spending problem."

House Democrats met the deal with scorn, indicating they would inflict maximum political pain by making Republicans either break a campaign promise to carry it to passage or defy their leaders. But other Democrats were more sanguine. The president had said he would not sign a short-term debt ceiling increase, but a senior administration official said that as long as there were no surprises, the White House was likely to accept the House's offer. Most important, the official said, Republicans had broken from the "Boehner rule" imposed in 2011: any debt ceiling increase was to include a dollar-for-dollar spending reduction.

Full article: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/19/us/politics/house-gop-agrees-to-lift-debt-ceiling-for-3-months.html?_r=1&
