

Key Points on the New Plan to Open the Government

The plan announced today represents a path forward to restore majority rule in the House of Representatives and to have a House vote on a clean continuing resolution at the Senate funding levels. This “Open the Government” resolution will finally allow a House vote on a clean continuing resolution with the funding levels that both the House and Senate have agreed to and presents a unique way forward to resolve the budget crisis. It does not require any action by the Republican leadership. Using the discharge petition process authorized by the House rules, a majority of the members of the House can require an up or down vote on a clean continuing resolution. The discharge petition can be filed in seven legislative days after the introduction of the resolution, and if a majority of House members sign the discharge petition, a floor vote on a clean continuing resolution could occur as early as October 14th.

A discharge petition provides a smart and credible way to reopen the government after weeks of obstruction by Republican leadership and a group of conservative Republicans determined to hold government operations hostage to their unrelated demands to block Obamacare. Democrats want to reopen the government but have been denied a House vote on a clean funding resolution. However, according to some media outlets, more than 20 House Republican members have expressed support for a clean government funding resolution. This plan will give Democrats and like-minded Republicans the opportunity to have that vote and reopen the federal government, while respecting the views of all members of the House of Representatives, as long as the House Republican leadership doesn’t act to sabotage this effort.

Ending the federal shutdown is vital to keeping the economic recovery strong. We don’t have a moment to lose; shutting down the federal government is costing taxpayers tens of millions of dollars each day. The shutdown is weakening our economic growth, undermining critical investments in education and children, delaying life-saving research to find cures for diseases, and sabotaging major job-creating investments. Using the discharge petition process provided in House rules restores majority rule in the House of Representatives and allows the federal government to reopen.

Legislative Steps to Reopen the Government through the “Open the Government” resolution:

1. “Open the Government” resolution introduced and referred to the House Rules Committee. (October 4).
2. After seven legislative days of inaction, discharge petition is filed and House members can sign the petition calling for immediate House consideration. (earliest estimated date: October 11)
3. Once a majority of members’ signatures are collected, a motion is made on the House floor to discharge the resolution from the Rules Committee for immediate House consideration. (earliest date: October 14)
4. Once the resolution is adopted, the House would then debate a continuing resolution with the House and Senate agreed-to spending levels as a substitute to H.R. 1164 – a Republican bill introduced more than 30 days ago – and take an up or down vote. After House passage, the Senate would have to approve the bill.