



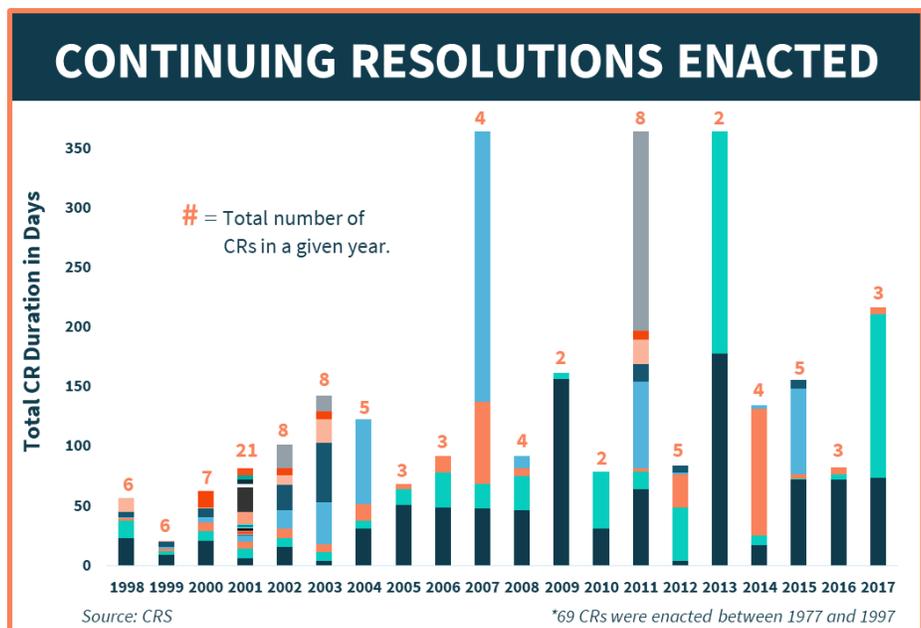
September 25, 2018

STATUS OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019

The most fundamental role of Congress described in Article I of the Constitution is the power of the purse—a duty fulfilled through the federal budget process established by the *Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974* (Budget Act). While there is bipartisan agreement in both chambers that this process needs to be improved, Congress has recently made encouraging progress in funding the government for fiscal year (FY) 2019.

Delays in the Process Again. Not unlike past fiscal years, there have still been delays in the process for considering FY 2019 appropriations bills. Since the Budget Act does not provide adequate enforcement mechanisms, statutory deadlines are often missed. As a result, Congress frequently relies on continuing resolutions or omnibuses, causing uncertainty about government spending or raising the threat of a shutdown.

Status of Government Funding. Earlier this month, the first three of the 12 regular appropriations bills were passed by both chambers of Congress and sent to the President’s desk. Signed into law last week, the three bills were considered as a single “minibus” package: H.R. 5895, which included Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction-Veterans Affairs FY 2019 appropriations.



This week, Congress continues its work to responsibly fund the government. The House will consider H.R. 6157, legislation which includes the Labor-HHS and Defense appropriations bills. However, the legislation also includes a short-term continuing resolution through December 7, 2018. If signed into law, five of the 12 appropriations bills will be complete, and the continuing resolution will prevent a government shutdown by providing a continuation of FY 2018 funding levels for the remainder of the government.

The Need for Reform. More than 40 years since the Budget Act created the existing framework, the historical record shows that Congress rarely follows the required steps and meets process deadlines. In fact, regular order has not been followed since fiscal year 1995—the last time Congress passed a budget conference agreement followed by all 12 appropriations bills before the beginning of the new fiscal year. Instead, the trend over the past decades has been relying on continuing resolutions; between 1977 and 2017, Congress enacted 176. Over the same period, the Federal Government shut down 19 times. The bipartisan, bicameral Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform is currently looking for solutions to make the process more efficient.