

DACA deal done, border wall funded

February 23, 2018

At midnight on Feb. 9, the government shut down. Congress worked through the wee hours of the morning to agree to a bipartisan budget to fund the government, and came out with a bill which will sustain the federal government for two years.

The bill was staunchly opposed by Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, who gave a filibuster-type speech on the floor of the Senate. He was requesting time to include an amendment to the budget which would cap the spending. But Republican leadership would not hear his request.

Because there was no cap on federal spending, the federal deficit is projected to increase by \$1 trillion each year. There have been no proposed plans to offset the enormous amount of federal spending. The government will instead be forced to borrow more to fund all the programs.

Funding for non-defense and defense spending will increase to about \$300 billion throughout the funding period. The bill will also temporarily eliminate the debt limit for one year.

Included in the bill is \$90 billion to go to areas stricken from environmental disasters, like Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico. Six billion dollars were also appropriated to battle the opioid epidemic. Both issues garnered lots of bipartisan support.

Despite promises from both Democratic and Republican leadership, no deal was made on DACA, chain migration, or immigration as a whole.

In the days following, President Donald Trump's budget director, Mick Mulvaney, said the budget plan will include \$3 billion for a southern border wall. Mulvaney acknowledged the federal deficit will increase sharply, but he says the administration will recommend procedures to avert the rising deficit. He also continued by saying there will be a contingency for \$25 billion over the next two years to shelter "Dreamers" under DACA.

"What I'm saying in a very confusing way is that we are assuming in our 2018 proposal that a DACA deal is done and that the border wall is funded," said Mulvaney.

According to the proposal, Trump will still urge Congress to cut spending to certain government agencies, like the Environmental Protection Agency and the State Department and encourage spending toward infrastructure.

Additionally, Trump's new budget would impact college students.

“The proposal would sharply curtail income-based loan repayment plans, scratch the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, embolden the government to go after students who don’t pay their loans and cut funding for federal work study in half,” according to CNBC.

The new budget would also eliminate subsidized loans. But, studies and research indicates removing subsidized loans would be more beneficial for college students since federal loans have shown to increase tuition.

According to analysis done by Forbes based on information from Federal Reserve of New York, “a dollar of subsidized (non-PLUS) student loans increases published tuition by 58 cents at a typical college, with larger effects once reductions in institutional financial aid are taken into account.”

Taking a cue from Ivanka Trump, the president included a plan for states to create paid family leave programs. The proposed budget would include at least six weeks pay for new mothers and fathers. The proposal would call for states to create paid family leave programs based on unemployment insurance.

The budget has drawn criticism from the conservative wing of the GOP.

Matt Schlapp, President of the American Conservative Union, shared his thoughts.

“If the Republicans in Congress don’t realize that spending control is one of the most important issues that our winning coalition cares about, if they are cavalier about spending decisions, I think we do risk our ability to go to the voters and say it matters to have us in the majority,” said Schlapp. “I would urge the White House to be willing to move congressional leaders to take tougher stands when it comes to spending.”