

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
TESTIMONY OF REPRESENTATIVE STEVE STIVERS (OH-15)
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGET PROCESS
H.R.114-BIENNIAL BUDGETING AND APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2011
JANUARY 24, 2012
H-313 THE CAPITOL

I would like to thank Chairman Pete Sessions (R-TX) and Ranking Member Jared Polis (D-CO) for holding this hearing on biennial budgeting today, and appreciate this discussion on ways we can make the Federal government fiscally sound. Additionally, I would like to thank Chairman David Dreier (R-CA) and Representative Ed Whitfield (R-KY) for their leadership on H.R. 114, the Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act of 2011.

Since coming to Congress last year, I have been working with Chairman Dreier and Representative Whitfield to reform our budget process and explain the merits of biennial budgeting and how this reform would improve the current Congressional budget process.

The current budget process is completely broken. As you may know, today marks 1,000 days since the Senate has passed a budget. This failure and Congress' inability to pass appropriations legislation in regular order shows that the Congressional budget process needs reform. Fiscal Year 1997 was the last year Congress passed appropriations in regular order.

Before coming to Congress, I advocated for a biennial budget. As an Ohio State Senator and Vice Chair of the Finance Committee, I had time to extensively review the state budget given the two-year budget cycle. Ohio is one of 19 states that operate on a biennial budget, and Texas and Ohio are two examples of large states with complex budgets that use biennial budgeting.

In Ohio, the biennium begins on July 1 of odd-numbered years and ends 24 months later on June 30. Within a biennium are two separate fiscal years, each beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30. This two-year budget process in Ohio has allowed for long-term planning of state programs and has decreased opportunities for politics to override sound fiscal policy decisions.

In the current budget process, Congress has only met its responsibility to pass appropriations in a regular order 17 percent of the time-17 percent is simply not good enough. Under H.R. 114, Congress would be spending the second session of Congress reviewing expired laws, and conducting aggressive oversight of federal programs to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent efficiently and effectively.

Biennial budgeting is also business savvy, as it allows the federal government to procure contracts with private companies and vendors in two-year increments potentially increasing the federal government's ability to lock in the best deal for the taxpayer.

I also want to point out that when Congress needs to act in response to a natural disaster, national security threat or war, H.R. 114 also includes provisions that will allow Congress to act swiftly.

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Mr. Chairman, I believe the Ohio experience with the two-year budget has been successful, and a biennial budget at the federal level would be a useful tool in our continued efforts to cut wasteful government spending. Biennial budgeting is not a panacea, but it is a step in the right direction. Again, I thank the Chairman for this dialogue as we work to improve the federal budget process.