

*Questions for the Record for the Honorable Jacob J. Lew  
House Committee on the Budget  
The President's FY 2015 Revenue and Economic Policy Proposals  
March 13, 2014*

**The Honorable Reid Ribble**

**Question 1:**

**Over the years, numerous examples of committee testimony and news reports have shown that you support Congress switching from its current annual budget process to biennial budgeting. Do you still support Congress adopting biennial budgeting? Does the Obama Administration support it?**

**Answer:**

Sound budget planning is essential to achieving our fiscal priorities. I have previously expressed support for a biennial budget and appropriations process. I believe such a process would enhance Congress' ability to oversee and assess the effectiveness of programs receiving federal dollars. Whether budgeting is done on an annual or biennial basis, our goal should be to ensure that we spend every taxpayer dollar wisely as well as we reduce our deficits in a way that is balanced and safeguards our economic recovery.

**Question 2:**

**Last month, the House Budget Committee approved H.R. 1869, the Biennial Budgeting and Enhanced Oversight Act of 2014 on a strong 22-10 bipartisan vote. Does the administration believe this legislation would improve the current budget process?**

**Answer:**

The idea of biennial budgeting has the potential to facilitate greater budgetary certainty, better agency planning, and more time to focus on execution and effectiveness, but only if all parties agree to make it work. If there is not some basic level of bipartisan cooperation between the political parties and House and Senate members, then no budget process – be it biennial budgeting or any other – will be able to achieve the goal of a regular process that functions smoothly and provides certainty.

Different parties have different approaches to ensure the budget and appropriations process runs smoothly, but we all share the same goals, and the Administration is always open to working with Congress on new ways to advance these goals.

**Question 3:**

**What, if any, additional budget process recommendations would you or the Administration support in order to ensure a more efficient budget process?**

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Answer:

The most important thing that we can do to ensure a more efficient budget process is to return to a regular, predictable bipartisan process that provides budget levels and appropriations in a timely fashion. The recent bipartisan budget and appropriations agreements are positive steps in that direction, and I believe we should build on that progress. Doing so will provide agencies with greater certainty and allow them to appropriately plan and focus on timely execution and effectiveness of Federal programs.

The Administration is open to working with Congress on other budget process recommendations that would further advance these goals. For example, the Administration supports reforms to how wildfire response is funded; providing reliable, dependable sources of funding for surface transportation programs and program integrity activities; and providing the President expedited rescission authority that would create an important tool to reduce unneeded funding.