

**Congressman David Dreier**  
**H.R. 2664, the Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act of 2005**  
**Summary**

The annual rush to complete action on budget, authorization and appropriations bills not only results in a poor budget process, but also reduces the amount of time available for careful oversight and management of existing federal programs.

- During the 31 year history of the Budget Act, Congress has met the deadline for completion of a budget resolution only six times.
- Since 1953, Congress has been forced to enact continuing resolutions to fund government activities past the end of the fiscal year in every year but four (FY1953, FY1989, FY1995 and FY1997).
- According to the Congressional Budget Office, Congress provided \$170 billion in fiscal year 2005 appropriations for 167 statutes whose authorizations had expired.

H.R. 2664, the Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act of 2005, will streamline the budget process and improve the fiscal management and oversight of government programs by instituting a biennial budget system. Under the bill, the President would submit a two-year budget and Congress would consider a two-year budget resolution and 11 two-year appropriations bills during the first session. The second session would be devoted to consideration of authorization bills, programmatic oversight of government agencies and emergency spending bills.

Specifically, this legislation will provide:

**Better Program Oversight and Improved Authorizations**

- By eliminating repetitive and time-consuming appropriations work, the Congress as a whole and even the appropriations subcommittees would be better able to focus on oversight. This would also contribute to more appropriate funding decisions in biennial appropriation bills and any necessary supplemental/recision legislation.
- As with oversight, biennial budgeting would allow more time for needed authorization legislation. In addition, the overwhelming appropriations work load every year has upset the intended balance in the role of authorizations and appropriations. Biennial budgeting would help restore the importance of the authorization process.

**Improved Management**

- Preparing for annual appropriations is as much or more of a drain on time and resources for federal agencies as it is for Congress. Biennial budgeting would increase agency efficiency and provide them with more stable and predictable budgets. In addition, Congress would be able to exercise better oversight over them.

**More Predictability by Providing Budget Stability for the States**

- As recently as WWII, all but four states had biennial budgeting. The growing dependence on annually appropriated big-government programs, however, helped moved many to change to annual cycles. Although this trend has reversed in recent years (today, 21 states have biennial budgets), biennial budgeting at the federal level would help states return to this common sense process. Even if states retain annual cycles, they will benefit from more stable and predictable federal funding.

**Less Incentive for Wasteful Spending by Encouraging More Responsible Spending**

- Budgeting and appropriating two fiscal years at a time better exposes year-to-year funding changes to scrutiny and requires more prudent funding decisions.