

Some GOP Hardliners Say They'd Welcome a Shutdown

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The Senate Appropriations Committee intends to start working next week on funding bills for fiscal year 2024, using the nearly \$1.6 trillion cap on discretionary spending that was agreed to in the bipartisan budget deal signed into law earlier this month.

“After holding nearly 40 hearings to assess our country’s needs for the coming year, we are keeping the appropriations process in the Senate moving forward in a bipartisan way,” Sens. Patty Murray, the Democratic Appropriations Chair, and Susan Collins, the committee’s top Republican, said in a statement.

The problem, however, is that House Republicans are approving funding bills reflecting 2022 spending levels, cutting about \$120 billion from the bipartisan agreement for 2024, setting up a clash that could produce another showdown and possibly a government shutdown at the beginning of the new fiscal year in October.

Saying they are under no obligation to appropriate funding at the agreed-to caps, which they say set a ceiling rather than a floor, hardline House Republicans are attempting to reclaim their goal of pushing spending levels back to 2022 levels. And they're not happy with Speaker Kevin McCarthy's failure to reduce spending to levels that the most conservative House Republicans want to see.

"He's not doing '22 spending levels; he's talking '22 spending levels," Rep. Andy Biggs, who previously led the far-right Freedom Caucus, said, referring to McCarthy. "Talk is cheap."

As worries about a potential shutdown in the early fall grow, some GOP hardliners say they don't see a problem. "We shouldn't fear government shutdown," Rep. Bob Good, a member of the House Freedom Caucus, said. "If we shut it down in order to try to bring fiscal stability and fiscal solvency, that will save the country from an economic and fiscal standpoint for our kids and grandkids."

Making his view of the value of the federal government perfectly clear, he added, "Most of what we do up here is bad anyway."

Florida Rep. Byron Donalds, another Freedom Caucus member, has much the same take. "I'm not afraid of shutdowns," Donalds told [Punchbowl News](#). "American life doesn't halt because government offices are closed ... We have to be serious about spending."

Democratic Sen. Chris Van Hollen said the hardline rebellion does not bode well for the appropriations process. "This is obviously a bad start in the House because the ink was barely dry ... before Speaker McCarthy ran away from the bargain he struck," he told [The Hill](#). "It seems pretty clear that Speaker McCarthy's No. 1 priority is political survival and I think feels he has to cater to the far-right, MAGA crowd there. It's clearly going to make for some rocky moments over the next couple of [months]."

Hawaii Sen. Brian Schatz, a Democratic appropriator, told [The Hill](#) that the House spending plan "doesn't strike me as serious. ... I don't think it can pass the House and even if it does it definitely can't pass the Senate," he said. "We're going to have to do a bipartisan appropriations bill and they can start out with whatever partisan position they want, but this ain't it."