

## Learning about Legislation #27 - Rescission

The standard, English-language definition for the word rescission is “the revocation, cancellation, or repeal of a law, order, or agreement.” When dealing with Congressional legislation, however, rescission has a more specific meaning. In the United States Senate [online glossary](#), rescission is defined as “the cancellation of budget authority previously provided by Congress. The Impoundment Control Act of 1974 specifies that the president may propose to Congress that funds be rescinded. If both Houses have not approved a rescission proposal (by passing legislation) within 45 days of continuous session, any funds being withheld must be made available for obligation.”

This week, the House voted on a rescission bill (H.R. 3) that would pull back \$15 billion in funds from the \$1.3 trillion spending bill passed earlier this year. One way to look at this is that many of the line items put into the spending bill were part of tense negotiations, and were added to ensure the full support of enough legislators so that the bill would pass. Clawing back those funds now, after the required votes had been obtained, could be perceived as breaking a deal.

Nearly half of the funds being taken back in the rescission bill are from the Children’s Health Insurance Plan (CHIP). In his comments on this issue, House Majority Whip Steve Scalise said, via reporting from *The Hill*, “...we overfunded the CHIP program, and so as that surplus money was identified, we made sure that that money will be able to be used to reduce the deficit and go to other things.” But Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), the ranking member on the House Appropriations Committee, countered that claim, observing, “Targeting CHIP for a rescission prevents Congress from reinvesting in other priorities like child and maternal health, early childhood education, biomedical research and our community health centers.”