

insights

TYPES NOT MAPPED YET April 03, 2020 | TTR not mapped yet | Christopher T. Murray

Supplemental Appropriations - COVID-19 Edition

Supplemental Appropriations: Federal spending allocated outside of the regular appropriations process, often due to an emergency.

I'll Stand by You

Congress's appropriations cycle generally follows a predictable schedule. The federal fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30, and 12 appropriations bills in sum fund federal spending during that period every year.

Congress retains the ability to pass spending measures outside this [process](#), should the need arise. Enter supplemental appropriations! [Supplemental appropriations](#) are emergency federal spending bills considered and adopted outside of the regular appropriations cycle. Such funds are allocated on an as-needed basis for urgent matters, and because of that, they can face less scrutiny and result in less partisanship and are often exempt from budget controls.

Ain't No Mountain High Enough

Over the past few decades, supplemental appropriations have been utilized to fund wars, responses to terrorist attacks, hurricane relief [efforts](#), and disease outbreaks. From 9/11 to Katrina to Ebola, supplemental appropriations are a key tool that Congress uses to surge federal funds for a particular purpose. The amounts vary, depending on the perceived need. Congress appropriated \$26 billion after the 2001 terror attacks and \$21 billion in 2008 alone for [natural disasters](#). In February 2009, President Obama signed the Recovery Act into law, which was a supplemental appropriations package providing more than \$800 billion to support the recovery from the Great Recession.

Light of A Clear Blue Morning

Congress is currently using a series of emergency supplemental appropriations bills in effort to combat the rampant spread of COVID-19 and to contain the economic fallout. To date, Congress has passed three supplemental appropriations packages related to COVID-19, all in March 2020 alone.

[COVID I](#), signed into law on March 6, provided \$8 billion for health programs and \$7 billion for small business loans. [COVID II](#), signed into law on March 18, focused on expanding testing for the pandemic as well as paid leave and unemployment benefits. [COVID III](#), also known as the CARES Act, was signed into law on Friday and is the largest economic stimulus package in U.S. history at \$2.2 trillion (almost three times larger than the 2009 Recovery Act). COVID III touches nearly every corner of the U.S. economy, including loans to companies large and small, expanding health care capacity, direct payments to low- and middle-income Americans, and many other programs.

Speaker Pelosi has said publicly and consistently that she expects to move forward with additional supplemental appropriations to help the country weather COVID-19. COVID IV discussions are preliminarily underway on Capitol Hill, and COVID V could follow afterwards.



authorsTest

christopher

Christopher T. Murray