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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Floor Statement for Rep. Jim Cooper to H.R. 325 – No Budget, No Pay Act

Submittal for Congressional Record

Mr. Chairman. I rise today to support No Budget, No Pay. The idea behind No Budget, No Pay came from a Nashvillian who approached me two years ago and said, "I don't get paid if I don't do my job, and do it on time. Why should Congress be any different?" I agreed, and I introduced No Budget, No Pay in 2011 during the last Congress with the help of the important non-partisan reform group No Labels. I reintroduced the bill, H.R. 310, last Friday, with 48 original cosponsors, 19 Democrats and 29 Republicans.

The purpose of No Budget, No Pay is to get Congress to do its essential budgeting work on time. This means pay-for-performance, a new concept here on Capitol Hill. Getting the job done on time is a fundamental American principle yet one that has been forgotten in our nation's Capitol. Our No Budget, No Pay proposal aligns incentives of elected officials with those of our citizens back home so that we will start completing our work on time in order to get paid. The purpose of this bill is not punishment, but performance.

We are in an interesting parliamentary situation today because, after stonewalling by both political parties, the Republican Party has now, suddenly and without hearings, adopted a diluted version of No Budget, No Pay for immediate floor consideration. Thankfully, the Democratic Party has decided not to make this a partisan issue, freeing members to vote as their conscience tells them.

I am not defending Republican floor procedures, or the modifications they made to my bill. But the important point is that reform of Congress is long overdue, and this is the way to start, with a new type of reform that brings Congress back in line with the values and the work ethic of the American people. No work, no pay. No budget, no pay.