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The government shutdown and impending debt ceiling crisis were at the forefront of budget talks this October. From October 1 to October 16 the federal government underwent a partial shutdown, halting programs and furloughing workers that did not contribute to the immediate protection of life and property. During those 16 days, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives attempted to pass legislation that would fund and reopen certain parts of the government, such as the Office of Veteran's Affairs and the National Park Service, but leave the remainder of agencies closed. However, Senate Democrats refused to entertain the piece-meal approach.

The evening before the U.S. government was predicted to run out of its borrowing authority, Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans came together to pass a bipartisan Continuing Resolution to fund the government through January 15, 2014 and raise the debt ceiling until February 7, 2014. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 81 - 18 and the House by a vote of 285 - 144. The bill was signed into law by the President and furloughed employees returned to work the next day.

A joint House-Senate committee now has until December 13, 2013 to establish a spending plan.

During the shutdown, all 401 National Parks were shuttered, the U.S. Geological Survey furloughed all but 43 of more than 8000 employees, and many others from federal agencies including NSF, NASA, NOAA, and NIST were required to stop working. Websites for most federal agencies were also inaccessible. Many Congressional staff were furloughed or worked without pay, and the House postponed a number of its hearings.

Standard and Poor's estimates that the shutdown cost the US economy \$24 billion.

Sources: C-SPAN, Standard and Poor's, the U.S. Geological Survey.
