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The Tea is Cooling: The First Session of the 113th Congress

Many pundits and commentators have been quick – perhaps even eager – to proclaim that the Tea Party is dead. For their part, voters have not always been inclined to agree. Candidates aligned with or reflecting many principles of this limited government movement have pulled out some stunning upsets during this election season. Chief among them is the historic, unprecedented primary-level defeat of a Majority Leader of the House of Representatives. And while the Tea Party’s impact on reducing Congressional spending agendas is still evident, results from the current Congress show that its effect may be cooling.

Because the Tea Party is largely a localized, grassroots phenomenon supporting an overarching agenda, its participants can sway legislation and the formation of policy, not just the fortunes of candidates. Whatever influence the Tea Party may be exerting on the *electoral* process, is there a way to analyze its impact on the *budget* process? Thanks to National Taxpayers Union Foundation’s (NTUF) BillTally system, the answer is emphatically “yes”.

The Tea Party freshman class of the previous 112th Congress helped bring the cost of Senators’ and Representatives’ agendas down significantly. During the current 113th Congress, there are still a significant number of lawmakers calling for cuts, but not as many as during the previous Congress and the dollar amount of the proposed cuts is smaller. The data from the last Congress showed a widening chasm between those who would grow the government and those proposing to shrink it. That gap is narrowing this Congress as the average Republican is calling for more modest budgetary pullbacks and the average Democrat, on the other hand, is calling for less budgetary expansion.

This report summarizes data from NTUF’s BillTally accounting software, which computes the cost or savings of all legislation introduced in the First Session of the 113th Congress that affects spending by at least \$1 million. Agenda totals for individual lawmakers were developed by cross-indexing their sponsorship and cosponsorship records with cost estimates for 608 House bills and 388 Senate bills under BillTally accounting rules that prevent the double counting of overlapping proposals. All sponsorship and cost data in this report were reviewed confidentially by each Congressional office prior to publication. Appendix A lists all Members alphabetically, Appendix B lists Members by state delegation, and Appendix C gives a thorough explanation of the BillTally methodology.

I. Data Highlights

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- During the First Session of the 113th Congress, Representatives authored 496 spending bills and 112 savings bills. Senators drafted 332 increase bills and 56 savings bills. While the number of increases was the lowest seen since the 105th Congress, this is also the first time in several years that there were fewer cut bills introduced compared to the preceding Congress.
 - The ratio of increase bills for every cut bill introduced in the House shrunk from over 21:1 in the 110th Congress to 3.8 to 1 in the 112th Congress. This year saw the ratio climb to 4.4 to 1.
 - In the Senate, the ratio of increases to cuts reached a high of 32:1 in the 108th Congress. That ratio steadily declined over each successive Congress, falling to 4.4:1 in the 112th Congress. During the current Congress, there were nearly 6 bills to raise spending for each bill that would reduce spending.
 - Many bills introduced contain a mix of spending and savings proposals. All of the 497 non-duplicative increase proposals included among all of the bills in the House would, if enacted, hike spending by \$1.7 trillion. The 99 non-overlapping savings measures would reduce outlays by \$486 billion. **Combined, the House’s legislative workload would add a net of \$1.17 trillion to the budget, or \$9,571 per household.**
 - Senators offered a total of 317 non-overlapping proposals that would add \$1.12 trillion annually to the budget, partially offset by 51 non-duplicate savings provisions totaling \$501 billion. The net cost of the Senate’s legislation would reach \$620 billion (\$5,059 per household).
 - Combined, the net impact of all non-overlapping legislation in both the House and the Senate would raise outlays by \$1.09 trillion, enlarging outlays by a third. This is a result of 680 spending initiatives costing \$1.84 trillion and 119 savings proposals of \$750 billion.
 - Among the House caucuses self-identified as “fiscally conservative,” the typical Member who had been officially affiliated with the Tea Party Caucus had the largest net cutting agenda (\$127 billion) followed by the Republican Study Committee (\$99 billion). The average House Member of the Republican Main Street Partnership, a related caucus that also espouses “fiscal discipline,” offered \$32 billion in cuts. Meanwhile, Members of the Democratic Blue Dog Coalition supported budget increases of \$95 billion: an agenda just one-fourth the size of the average Democrat’s.
 - In the House, the average Democrat called for net spending hikes of \$396.5 billion – nearly a hundred billion less than in the previous Congress and the lowest since the 107th Congress. This spending agenda would have boosted FY 2013’s total outlays by 11 percent.
 - During the previous Congress, the typical House Republican proposed, on net, a record level of spending cuts: \$130.2 billion. In this current Congress, the amount of cuts receded by over a third, to \$82.6 billion. Relative to FY 2013 total outlays, this would have reduced spending by just over 2 percent.

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- As recently as the 111th Congress (2009), the average Senate Democrat supported legislation that would have increased total spending by \$133.7 billion (which would have represented a 4 percent increase in total budgetary outlays for that year). In this Congress their average net agenda amounted to \$18.3 billion in new spending, which would grow the budget by one half of a percentage point. This marks the Senate Democrats' lowest recorded net spending agenda since the 104th Congress.
 - As in the previous Congress, the average Senate Republican was a net cutter, but called for a smaller level of reductions. The result was a net agenda that went from -\$238.7 billion to -\$159.1 billion (both net cuts). That amount would have shaved FY 2013 total outlays by 4.6 percent.
 - The number of Representatives and Senators who proposed net cutting agendas rose in each Congress since the 108th in the House, and the 107th in the Senate, reaching a total of 297 in the 112th Congress for both chambers combined. The trend reversed in the 113th Congress, falling to 249.
 - The trend of fewer Members from year to year with agendas greater than \$100 billion continued, falling to 68 in the House (down from 128 in the 111th) and just one in the Senate, down from 128 and 24, respectively in the 111th Congress.
 - The typical member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus would increase spending by \$857 billion, annually.

II. Analysis of the Findings

A. Representatives' "Wish Lists"

NTUF examines nearly every bill introduced in each Session of Congress to determine its effect on federal outlays.¹ After gathering this data, the cost estimates are matched up with the bills sponsored by each Member of Congress. A Senator's or Representative's record of authored and sponsored bills can be viewed as his or her legislative "wish list," free from the pressure of party leaders that normally comes with the voting process. By tabulating the cost and/or savings of each Member's agenda, taxpayers can gain a better understanding of the policy interests as well as the guiding budgetary philosophies of their elected representatives.

The previous Congress marked the rise of the Tea Party grassroots movement that originally coalesced in opposition to the bailout measures enacted in response to the 2008 mortgage-debt fueled economic crisis, and also against the "stimulus" package in 2009. Also fueling the fervor was the controversial – and costly – Affordable Care Act. While there are a few prominent national Tea Party-associated organizations, the movement is notable for its lack of centralized leadership;

instead it is primarily guided by local organizations of citizens aligned around the principles of limited government and fiscal responsibility.

After the 2010 Tea Party wave election, the number of savings bills introduced in the House and Senate approached levels not seen since the 104th Congress. Compared to recent years, the data from the current Congress shows a reversal of trends that had seen the number of savings proposals steadily climb from year to year.

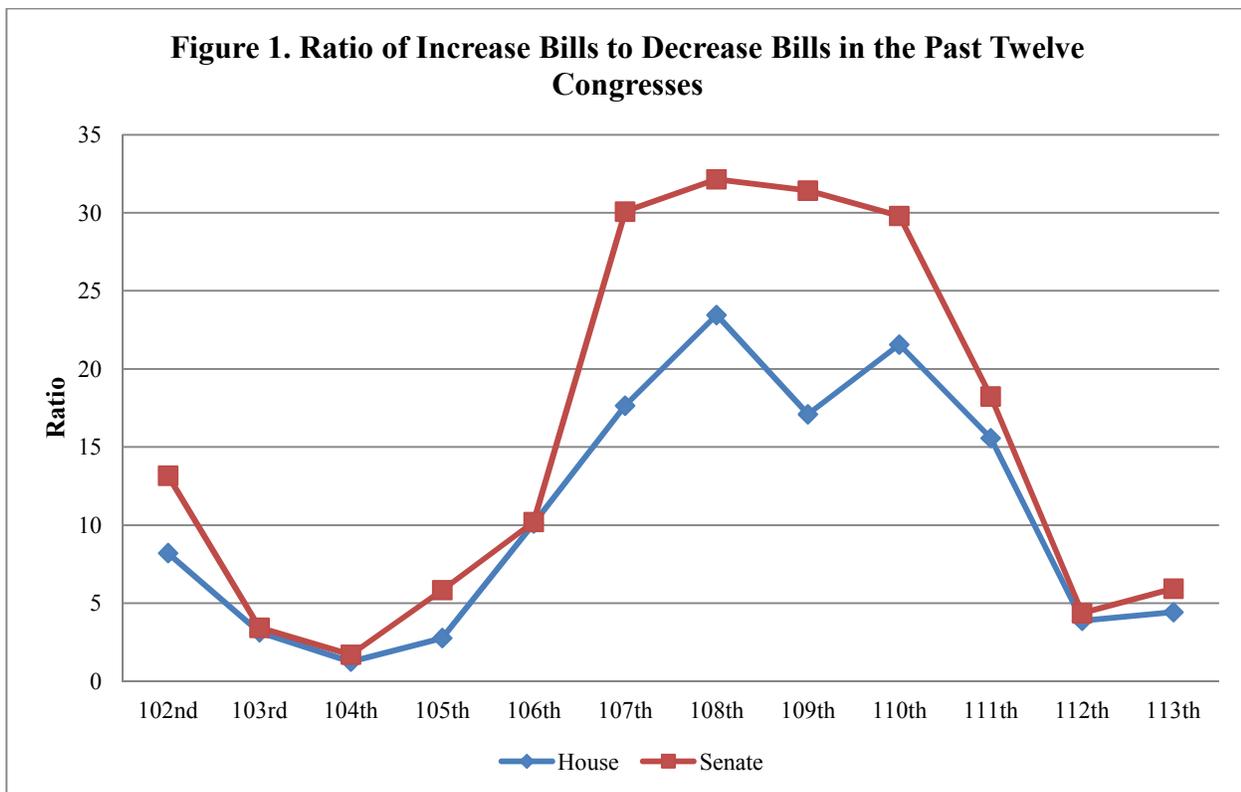
B. Bill Introduction Rates

Table 1. Bill Introduction Rates in the Past Twelve Congresses and Number of Scored Bills			
Congress	Spending Increase Bills	Spending Cut Bills	Ratio of Increase Bills to Decrease Bills
House			
102 nd	640	78	8.21
103 rd	722	229	3.15
104 th	316	250	1.26
105 th	440	159	2.77
106 th	515	51	10.10
107 th	653	37	17.65
108 th	821	35	23.46
109 th	821	48	17.10
110 th	1,078	50	21.56
111 th	981	63	15.57
112 th	562	145	3.88
113 th	496	112	4.43
Senate			
102 nd	395	30	13.17
103 rd	425	124	3.43
104 th	207	121	1.71
105 th	321	55	5.84
106 th	418	41	10.20
107 th	391	13	30.08
108 th	643	20	32.15
109 th	597	19	31.42
110 th	745	25	29.80
111 th	620	34	18.24
112 th	371	85	4.37
113 th	332	56	5.93

The first evidence of a cooling of the Tea Party effect can be seen in the bill introduction rates in the first half of the current Congress. The last Congress kicked off with the largest number of proposals to cut spending since the “Contract with America” wave election almost 20 years ago. During 1995, Members introduced 250 cut proposals in the House and 121 in the Senate. The number of savings waned over the next several years, bottoming out at 35 in the House (108th Congress) and just 13 in the Senate (107th Congress). During the 112th “Tea Party” Congress the quantity of cut proposals dramatically spiked in both Chambers but fell back in the opening of the current Congress: dropping from 145 to 112 in the House and from 85 to 56 in the Senate.

However, Members of Congress also drafted fewer bills to increase spending introduced in both chambers. For the first time since the 105th Congress the number of spending bills in the House dropped below 500, when as recently as the 111th Congress – which included passage of both the so-called “stimulus” bill and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act – Members wrote nearly twice as many spending bills (981).

The Senate offered 332 bills that would increase budgetary outlays, the fewest since the 105th Congress when there were 321. In the intervening years, the total number rose to as high as 745 in the 110th Congress before dropping again. The largest decline – 40 percent – occurred between the 111th and 112th Congresses. From the 112th to the current Congress, the quantity of spending bills fell by 11 percent.



Despite the overall reduction in legislation that would impact outlays, taxpayers unfortunately saw the ratio of increase bills to cut bills go up. For two successive sessions in the House, and four in the Senate, members had gradually offered fewer spending proposals for each one to cut: from over 21 down to less than four in the House, and from a high of 32 dropping to 4 in the Senate. That trend stopped in the 112th Congress. Each chamber saw a slight rise in the ratio of increases to cuts in the opening of the 113th Congress.

C. Cost of All Unique Bills by Chamber

As noted, 496 bills in the House would, on net, increase spending while 112 would lead to a net reduction in outlays. Among the total number of bills introduced, several were duplicated proposals. For example, nine House bills in the study included language to repeal a cost saving measure that was passed in the so-called Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (BBA).

The BBA, crafted by Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), eliminated \$62 billion worth of spending cuts that were enacted into law in the Budget Control Act of 2011. These cuts were replaced with other savings that would be spread out over the next 10 years. According to the Congressional Budget Office, nearly 75 percent of the BBA’s spending increases (which result from cancelling the previously-enacted cuts) will occur in the first two years, while nearly 75 percent of the replacement cuts will not kick in until six to ten years from now.² One of the replacement cuts in the BBA slowed the growth of annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for retirement pay for certain veterans under age 62. Numerous proposals introduced in Congress after the passage of the BBA would have repealed this provision (for an annual cost of \$339 million) or would have excluded disabled vets from the COLA slowdown (\$29 million, annually).

Overlapping measures like these are identified and adjusted in the BillTally system in order to prevent double-counting. If a Representative or Senator is a sponsor of multiple pieces of legislation with duplicate aims, only the measure with the largest net increase or cut is counted toward the calculation of that Member’s net spending agenda. In addition, Members of Congress often draft complex packages that impact outlays over numerous issue areas. In some cases these are duplicative of either stand-alone bills or sections of other legislation. For purposes of this analysis, some of these types of bills were split into their component parts to track spending by issue area and to properly account for sections that contain overlapping proposals. This is also useful when comparing the annual rate of the spending with the annual rate of savings in certain legislative packages – such as proposals to extend emergency unemployment compensation – that include significant immediate outlays that are “paid for” over a longer period of time.

<p>Table 2. Cost of All the Non-Overlapping Proposals in Congress (Dollar Figures in Trillions)</p>
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	# of Non-Overlapping Measures	Cost
House		
Increases	497	\$1.658
Decreases	99	(\$0.486)
Total	596	\$1.172
Senate		
Increases	317	\$1.120
Decreases	51	(\$0.501)
Total	368	\$0.620
Both Chambers of Congress		
Increases	680	\$1.839
Decreases	119	(\$0.750)
Total	799	\$1.089
Note: Figures may not total due to rounding.		

NTUF identified 555 spending increase proposals among all of the House bills that were introduced. Of these, 497 were non-duplicative. If all of these measures were enacted into law, spending would jump by \$1.66 trillion. The bill per household for this new spending would be \$13,539.48.³

As noted, several duplicate or overlapping savings proposals were also introduced as stand-alone legislation, or included in a larger package of spending reduction proposals, or offered as partial offsets in legislation that would, on an annualized basis, increase spending. NTUF identified 143 House savings proposals among the bills included in this study, of which 99 were non-overlapping. The fiscal impact of these bills would see spending cut by \$485.6 billion. On net, the non-overlapping proposals introduced in the House would raise spending by \$1.17 trillion, or \$9,570.55 per household.

A close examination of all of the Senate bills with cost estimates identified 340 specific, major spending increase proposals, of which 317 were unique and non-overlapping, and 69 budget-cutting proposals, of which 51 were non-overlapping. The effect of the increase proposals would drive up the federal budget by \$1.12 trillion. Although there were fewer individual cuts as compared with the House, they would achieve a larger reduction of the budget. The 51 non-overlapping savings proposals would reduce spending by \$500.1 billion. On net, if all bills in the Senate were enacted into law, spending would increase by \$619.5 billion, or \$5,058.84 per household.

NTUF analyzed the non-overlapping legislation in each Chamber to estimate the total cost of the unique proposals covering all of Congress. Many sets of companion legislation are introduced separately in each Chamber. By comparing the non-overlapping proposals across the House and Senate, NTUF identified 680 measures to increase spending. If all of these proposals were enacted into law, spending would climb by nearly \$1.84 trillion. Out of all of the savings bills offered by each Chamber, 119 were unique and non-overlapping. In total, these would cut outlays by \$750 billion, leaving a net budgetary cost of \$1.09 trillion if Congress passed every one of the bills it drafted.

D. Party Averages

Table 3. House Sponsorship of Legislation in the First Sessions of the Past Twelve Congresses by Party (Dollar Amounts in Millions)				
Congress	Proposed Increases	Proposed Cuts	Net Agendas	Percent Change in Fiscal Year Budget Outlays
Democrats				
102 nd	\$109,248	(\$1,428)	\$107,821	8.14
103 rd	\$284,475	(\$22,221)	\$262,254	18.61
104 th	\$173,641	(\$8,979)	\$164,662	10.86
105 th	\$106,510	(\$2,815)	\$103,695	6.48
106 th	\$35,597	(\$1,707)	\$33,890	1.99
107 th	\$263,191	(\$836)	\$262,355	14.08
108 th	\$401,927	(\$356)	\$401,571	18.59
109 th	\$547,548	(\$166)	\$547,382	22.14
110 th	\$547,954	(\$971)	\$546,983	20.05
111 th	\$502,525	(\$2,332)	\$500,193	14.22
112 th	\$504,150	(\$7,348)	\$496,802	13.79
113 th	\$406,795	(\$10,311)	\$396,483	11.48
Republicans				
102 nd	\$15,165	(\$4,032)	\$11,134	0.84
103 rd	\$34,786	(\$54,143)	(\$19,356)	-1.37
104 th	\$5,405	(\$25,038)	(\$19,633)	-1.30
105 th	\$8,903	(\$16,308)	(\$7,405)	-0.46
106 th	\$16,952	(\$21,512)	(\$4,560)	-0.27
107 th	\$30,677	(\$10,908)	\$19,769	1.06
108 th	\$33,500	(\$2,821)	\$30,679	1.42
109 th	\$16,439	(\$4,854)	\$11,584	0.47
110 th	\$13,794	(\$7,009)	\$6,785	0.25
111 th	\$26,719	(\$71,990)	(\$45,271)	-1.29

112 th	\$5,316	(\$135,536)	(\$130,221)	-3.61
113 th	\$8,633	(\$91,280)	(\$82,647)	-2.39
Notes: Totals may not add due to rounding. Percent change in budgetary outlays based on Table 1.1 of the Historical Tables of the <i>Budget of the U.S. Government</i> for the first Fiscal Year of each respective Congress.				

The BillTally final report for the 112th Congress noted a widening gap between those in Congress pushing to expand the size of the federal budget, and those working to restrain it. The current data shows that this split remains, but it has been diminished: Democrats, on average, are calling for lower levels of new net spending, while the typical Republican is proposing smaller net cuts than in the previous Congress.

In the House, the average Democrat called for net hikes of \$396.5 billion – nearly a hundred billion less than in the previous Congress and the lowest since the 107th Congress (\$62.3 billion). The net cost of the average Democrat’s agenda peaked at \$547.0 billion in the 109th Congress. This year’s net total resulted from nearly \$407 billion in new spending hikes and \$10.3 billion in proposed cuts – the most cuts offered since the \$22.2 billion mark in the 103rd Congress.

In the 109th Congress (FY 2005), the agenda of the average Democrat would have boosted total federal outlays (which were \$2.5 trillion) by over 22 percent – twice the proportion as the current Congress.

During the previous Congress, the typical House Republican proposed, on net, a record level of spending cuts: \$130.2 billion. This time, the amount of cuts has been rolled back by over one-third, to \$82.6 billion. Yet, this is still by far the second highest level net spending cuts over the past 12 Congresses. If all the proposals sponsored by the average Republican became law at once, total federal outlays would have shrunk by just over 2 percent.

Table 4. Senate Sponsorship of Legislation in the First Sessions of the Past Twelve Congresses by Party (Dollar Amounts in Millions)				
Congress	Proposed Increases	Proposed Cuts	Net Agendas	Percent Change in Fiscal Year Budget Outlays
Democrats				
102 nd	\$34,099	(\$5,098)	\$29,001	2.19
103 rd	\$208,324	(\$12,044)	\$196,280	13.93
104 th	\$3,372	(\$4,629)	(\$1,257)	-0.08
105 th	\$21,769	(\$1,364)	\$20,405	1.27
106 th	\$15,526	(\$850)	\$14,676	0.86
107 th	\$88,337	(\$158)	\$88,179	4.73
108 th	\$174,406	(\$257)	\$174,150	8.06

109 th	\$52,331	(\$190)	\$52,141	2.11
110 th	\$59,921	(\$730)	\$59,191	2.17
111 th	\$137,035	(\$3,328)	\$133,706	3.80
112 th	\$29,408	(\$5,719)	\$23,688	0.66
113 th	\$21,530	(\$3,233)	\$18,296	0.53
Republicans				
102 nd	\$13,826	(\$8,548)	\$5,278	0.40
103 rd	\$42,276	(\$62,943)	(\$20,667)	-1.47
104 th	\$6,308	(\$22,247)	(\$15,939)	-1.05
105 th	\$13,209	(\$8,201)	\$5,008	0.31
106 th	\$9,048	(\$9,372)	(\$324)	-0.02
107 th	\$18,726	(\$22)	\$18,703	1.00
108 th	\$28,563	(\$2,479)	\$26,084	1.21
109 th	\$14,554	(\$3,178)	\$11,377	0.46
110 th	\$13,076	(\$6,543)	\$6,533	0.24
111 th	\$76,340	(\$25,413)	\$50,927	1.45
112 th	\$2,432	(\$241,089)	(\$238,657)	-6.62
113 th	\$5,792	(\$164,895)	(\$159,103)	-4.61

Notes: Totals may not add due to rounding. Percent change in budgetary outlays based on Table 1.1 of the Historical Tables of the *Budget of the U.S. Government* for the first Fiscal Year of each respective Congress. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) is not included in this table.

A similar trend is also observed in the Senate sponsorship patterns for each party. As recently as the 111th Congress (2009), the average Democrat supported legislation that would have increased total spending by \$133.7 billion (equivalent to a 4 percent increase in total budgetary outlays for that year). In the current Congress the total has fallen to \$18.3 billion, which would grow the budget by one half of a percentage point. This marks the Senate Democrats' lowest recorded net spending agenda since the 104th Congress.

During the opening year of the "Tea Party" Congress, the average Republican Senator proposed a net legislative agenda to cut spending by \$238.7 billion, which would have shaved 2011's total federal budget by 6.6 percent. This year's net savings agenda was one-third smaller, totaling \$159.1 billion, still the second highest level of cuts proposed by Senate Republicans. This is also only the second time that Senate Republicans have called for net spending reductions in consecutive Congresses; the last occurrence was in the 103rd and 104th Congresses.

E. The Outliers

Table 5. Number of Members with Net Agendas to Reduce Spending vs. Members with Spending Agendas Greater than \$100 Billion

Congress	Members with Net Agendas to Reduce Spending	Members with Net Spending Agendas Greater Than \$100 Billion
House		
102 nd	14	90
103 rd	166	140
104 th	233	59
105 th	114	28
106 th	115	1
107 th	30	74
108 th	13	129
109 th	43	85
110 th	55	107
111 th	119	128
112 th	237	76
113 th	203	68
Senate		
102 nd	18	3
103 rd	38	31
104 th	75	0
105 th	12	0
106 th	23	0
107 th	1	4
108 th	3	23
109 th	6	5
110 th	11	8
111 th	24	24
112 th	60	6
113 th	46	1

As another demonstration of the narrowing gap between ambitious budget agendas, Table 5 compares the number of net cutters and those with the largest agendas to increase spending. Until the 113th Congress, the number of “net cutters” – those whose net spending agenda would reduce outlays – had grown for four consecutive sessions in the House and five in the Senate. Their ranks swelled from 13 to 237 in the House and from 1 to 60 in the Upper Chamber but declined by a total of 16 percent in 2013. All of the net cutters in the House were Republicans, while 2 Democrats were among the Senate net cutters.

At the same time, the ranks of Representatives and Senators with agendas to grow the budget by at least \$100 billion were also thinner. This group had its largest membership back in the 103rd

Congress when there were 171 between the two chambers. The recent high was seen in the 111th Congress with a total of 152 legislators, before declining to 69 in the current Congress. All of the House Members with net spending agendas over \$100 billion were members of the Democratic Party. Fifty-seven of these Representatives and Delegates were sponsors of legislation to enact a single-payer, universal health care system that would increase federal spending by over \$1 trillion. The lone Senator included in the table is Vermont's Independent Bernie Sanders.

F. Fiscally-Related Congressional Caucuses

Once elected to Congress, a Representative has the option to join any of several Member caucuses that organize around a particular issue area and/or political philosophy. In these caucuses, Members can share ideas and coordinate strategies to promote or oppose particular legislation. Such caucuses are more prevalent in the House.

Two long-standing caucuses, the Republican Study Committee (RSC) and the Democratic Blue Dog Coalition (BDC), both espouse fiscal discipline for their respective parties. The RSC states that it is dedicated to “a limited and Constitutional role for the federal government.”⁴ On its website, the BDC states that its Members are “dedicated to the financial stability ... of the United States” and have a “commitment to fiscal responsibility.”⁵ A related third caucus, the Republican Main Street Partnership (RMSP),⁶ was founded to “promote thoughtful leadership in the Republican Party and to develop and advocate for pragmatic common sense solutions to the challenges our country faces.”⁷ The Partnership's mission page states that its members are “main stream fiscally conservative elected officials.”⁸

In the 112th Congress, these organizations were joined by the Tea Party Caucus (TPC) that “stands for the fundamental principles of fiscal responsibility, limited government and strict adherence to the Constitution.”⁹ As an organization, the TPC has been largely quiet this Congress, with no updates on its “In the News” webpage from June 20, 2013 until February 27, 2014 (the latter to mark the Tea Party's fifth anniversary¹⁰). Nor is a list of active members available – another possible indication of the “cooling.” As a point of comparison with the other listed caucuses, the Tea Party averages include those Representatives officially identified as members of the caucus in the 112th Congress and who were re-elected to the 113th Congress.

Although these caucuses seem to share at least some fiscal objectives, there is a great deal of variance in the net agendas produced by participants in each of these organizations. Among the three Republican-aligned caucuses, the average member of the RMSP proposed the most increases (\$11.5 billion) and the smallest net cutting agenda (\$31.6 billion). The RMSP net agenda was also \$51 billion more than that of the typical Republican.

Members of the RSC proposed, on average, a net agenda to reduce spending by \$99 billion – over three times as many net spending cuts as those in the Partnership. Yet the RSC members were themselves out-cut by those who had been in the Tea Party Caucus. If all the bills supported by the average one-time Tea Party Caucus member were enacted, spending would be cut by \$127.5 billion.

Table 6. Average Spending Agendas by Caucuses and Member Organizations in the 113th Congress (in Millions)

Caucus	Proposed Increases	Number of Increase Bills	Proposed Cuts	Number of Cut Bills	Net Agenda
Republican Main Street Partnership	\$11,539	19	(\$43,187)	7	(\$31,648)
Republican Study Committee	\$7,724	15	(\$106,768)	12	(\$99,044)
Tea Party Caucus	\$9,333	16	(\$136,786)	14	(\$127,453)
Blue Dog Democrats	\$100,727	33	(\$5,969)	4	\$94,757
Congressional Progressive Caucus	\$872,603	77	(\$15,461)	5	\$857,143
Congressional Black Caucus	\$748,257	76	(\$12,744)	4	\$735,512

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding. There were 46 Republicans with membership in both the RSC this Congress who were formally in the TPC during the previous Congress, 21 Members in both the RSC and RMSP, and two overlapping in all three caucuses. RMSP data only includes its Members in the House. Members of the CPC and CBC are all Democrats.

On the other hand, the average member of the Blue Dog Coalition proposed net budgetary increases of \$94.8 billion, annually. While this figure appears out of sync with the three other self-identified “fiscally conservative” caucuses, it is much less than the net \$396 billion spending hike agenda of the average House Democrat.

As a further point of comparison, the table also includes two additional caucuses. The Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), which claims to be the largest subgroup within the general Democratic Caucus, included 65 Members in the opening of the 113th Congress. The Progressive Caucus makes no claim to “fiscal discipline” but instead favors “economic justice.”¹¹ The average Member of the CPC sponsored 77 proposals to increase spending and five bills to cut spending, for a net agenda of over \$857 billion – if enacted total budget outlays would rise by 25 percent. The Congressional Black Caucus states that it is “committed to utilizing the full Constitutional power, statutory authority, and financial resources of the Government of the United States of America to ensure that everyone in the United States has an opportunity to achieve their version of the American Dream.”¹² Its average member supported budget increases of \$735.5 billion, a 21 percent overall growth of the budget.

III. Conclusion

The 2010 electoral wave swept a sizeable group of freshmen into the 112th Congress in opposition to bailouts and “stimulus” and to provide a voice for limited government. For a while, at least, Speaker of the House John Boehner’s (R-OH) hand was strengthened in negotiations with the White House regarding the federal debt limit. One significant accomplishment of those talks was the eventual passage of the Budget Control Act of 2011. While it was not an ideal solution to the federal government’s budget long-term budget problems, it did enact real and enforceable statutory limits on expenditures for the next decade. However, unlike most new federal agencies and spending programs, cuts and caps scheduled to phase in over a long period of time are not permanent. In a vivid example demonstrating the difference between the current 113th Congress and its predecessor, a portion of the BCA’s cuts were rolled back through an agreement hashed out by the respective House and Senate Budget Committee chairs.

This Congress included fewer Representatives and Senators advocating legislative agendas to cut spending. The “Tea Party” effect of the last Congress may have waned, but the 203 net cutters in the House and the 46 in the Senate still represent close to half of each Chamber. Unfortunately, this caucus of cutters lacks partisan diversity: most are from the Republican side of the aisle. Yet, Democrats, on average, have scaled back the cost of the legislative agenda they are advocating compared to previous years. Part of this is due to passage of the Affordable Care Act, whereas in prior years health care overhaul legislation similar to that Act represented a significant portion of their net agendas.

Could this pushback also be a response to the electoral success of Tea Party-related candidates, tilting the debate on budget issues toward the side of (relative) restraint? The validity of such a theory could be strengthened or weakened depending on November’s elections.

Through the Tea Party movement, many voters demanded fiscal discipline from their government. The data in this report indicates that there is now less enthusiasm within Congress for budget cuts. Part of this dampening is perhaps due to the fact that tax revenues are flowing into the Treasury at a record rate. Yet, even under the White House’s own rosy budget projections – which assumes even higher tax rates going forward – the government would pile on an addition \$4.9 trillion in debt over the next ten years.¹³ This fiscal brew could prove bitter indeed.

¹ Regular appropriations bills are excluded. For more information, see the Methodology in Appendix C.

² *Bipartisan Budget Act*, Congressional Budget Office, December 11, 2013.

³ “Households by Type and Tenure of Householder for Selected Characteristics: 2013, U.S. Census Bureau. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/cps2013H.html>.

⁴ <http://rsc.scalise.house.gov/aboutrsc/whatisrsc.htm>

⁵ <http://bluedog.schrader.house.gov/about/>

⁶ The Republican Main Street Partnership includes Members from both Chambers, as well as officials at the state level. These figures are based only on RMSP Members serving in the House.

⁷ <http://www.republicanmainstreet.org/about-us/>.

⁸ <http://www.republicanmainstreet.org/mission-2/>.

⁹ <http://teapartycaucus-bachmann.house.gov/about-me>.

¹⁰ <http://teapartycaucus-bachmann.house.gov/news>.

¹¹ <http://cpc.grijalva.house.gov/index.cfm?sectionid=74§iontree=2,74>.

¹² <http://cbc.fudge.house.gov/about/>.

¹³ Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2014, Summary Tables*, April 2013. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2014/assets/tables.pdf>.