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# A1P: POWER OF THE PURSE

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## Congress *Has* the Power of the Purse: We Just Need to Use It

- Congress's power over the federal budget is exclusive and absolute. But for years, Congress has surrendered more and more of that responsibility to the Executive Branch.
- We have put approximately two-thirds of the federal budget on autopilot, and even made some agencies "self-funding." Furthermore, when Congress does pass spending legislation, it is often via massive spending bills that are negotiated by only a handful of Senators and Representatives, all while leaving the majority of members with little opportunity to weigh in beyond voting for or against the bill.
- This dysfunctional process discourages accountability and reform, and only perpetuates Washington's broken fiscal status quo.
- Even though we have let our powers atrophy, the Constitution gives Congress the power and responsibility to conduct oversight, end wasteful or abusive spending and implement real reforms.

## A1P Will Offer Solutions to Reclaim Congress's Power of the Purse

- A1P will offer reforms to modernize Congress's budget process for a post-earmark world, including reforms to the reconciliation and appropriations processes.
- A1P will propose reforms to end "self-funding" agencies and put all federal spending back into the official budget.
- A1P will incentivize Congress to make fiscal policy in the light of day, subject to public scrutiny and accountability, not behind closed doors and at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour.
- Restoring Congress's fiscal authority will re-balance power between the Legislative and Executive Branches, and also between the American people and their government.

## A1P's Reforms Will End Congress's Legislating by 'Cliffs'

- Congress has routinely avoided the hard work of budgeting, oversight, and reform. Instead, Congress often waits until right before manufactured deadline crises – "cliffs" – to take up major spending and debt legislation.
- "Cliff" bills are usually written in secret, and voted on at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour without any real debate or amendment. This insulates politicians and bureaucrats from accountability, but cuts the public out of the process altogether.
- A1P will propose reforms that will eliminate the risk of government shutdowns and debt default. We will incentivize Congress to *do* its job rather than avoid it.

*"When Congress is back in charge of federal spending,  
the American people will quickly be back in charge of the federal government."*

