

**Statement by
Representative Ann Marie Buerkle
before House Committee on Rules
H.R. 2551 – Legislative Branch Appropriations for FY 2012**

July 20, 2011

Mr. Chairman, I have offered four amendments to H.R. 2551, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for FY 2012 which are similar to legislation I introduced earlier this year, H.R. 2372, the Just Do Your Job Act.

All of us are well aware of the tremendous budget deficit in the federal government. While Congress is attempting to cut wasteful spending across the government, I believe the legislative branch should not be exempt.

One of the primary responsibilities of the Congress is to be careful stewards of the precious tax dollars we spend and budget our funds wisely. We cannot afford to waste these dollars.

As you know, the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires the Congress to pass a concurrent resolution on the budget each year. This law is on the books to ensure that we are properly planning and to provide transparency to the public on how we intend to restore fiscal responsibility.

To comply with the law, each house of Congress has a Budget Committee funded by the taxpayers. Millions of dollars are appropriated to these committees each year. While the House of Representatives has complied with the law and passed a Budget Resolution, the Senate has produced nothing.

This is not a small oversight. In fact, it has been 811 days since the Senate has passed a Budget Resolution.

This problem has nothing to do with legislation being filibustered on the floor. Nothing has been proposed. No legislation has been produced. Nothing has been offered for the Budget Committee to even consider.

In the past 800 days, the American taxpayers have spent over \$12 million funding a Senate Budget Committee and gotten nothing but press releases in return.

We can't afford to continue to waste taxpayers' money like this. If they can't or won't do their job, we should eliminate this waste.

In conjunction with that, the Office of the Majority Leader is responsible for scheduling legislation on the floor of the body. The Majority Leader must take responsibility for ensuring compliance with the law. To perform that duty, we appropriate millions of dollars each year to provide special funding to ensure that the Majority Leader can meet his obligations.

Again, for over 800 days, these funds have been wasted. If the Majority Leader cannot perform his job and comply with the law, he should stop wasting the taxpayers' money. My four amendments seek to force the Senate to do its job or stopping wasting the taxpayers' dollars.

My first amendment prohibits funding of the Budget Committee of either house if that house has not passed a Budget Resolution as required by law. As you know, the House of Representatives has passed a Budget Resolution for FY 2012. They have complied with the law and could continue to receive funding for the House Budget Committee. The Senate has failed

to pass or even propose a Budget Resolution. Therefore, they could not receive funding unless they pass one before the beginning of the fiscal year.

My second amendment attempts to comply with the prohibition on legislating on an appropriations bill by simply prohibiting funding for the Senate Budget Committee with no conditions.

My third amendment prohibits funding for the Office of the Senate Majority Leader. He has not complied with the law. Taxpayer funding should end until he complies with the law.

My fourth amendment reduces funding for the Office of the Senate Majority Leader by \$1 million. This is to serve as a penalty for failing to comply with the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. Part of his job is to pass a budget. If he can't pass a budget, part of his resources should be returned to the taxpayers.

I urge the committee to allow me to offer my amendments under a rule to consider H.R. 2551.