

# Will Congress raise the debt ceiling?



## Raise the ceiling

The CBO reported in July that Congress has until mid-October to raise the statutory borrowing limit or the United States will risk defaulting on its debt obligations. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has also pressured lawmakers to lift the debt ceiling before leaving Washington for the August recess.



### Call for a straight vote:

Members of Congress can hold a voice or recorded vote about whether or not to raise the debt ceiling. However, this could be politically dangerous for Republicans, specifically budget hawks, because their constituents could criticize them for raising the debt ceiling without cutting spending.

### Attach it as a rider:

Members of Congress could raise the debt limit as an amendment to a bill likely to pass, such as a spending bill. While this would likely be less controversial, it would force Senate Republicans to reach across the aisle and compromise with the Democrats.

### Suspend the debt ceiling:

Congress could also decide to not act and force the administration to prioritize certain payments while stopping others. In the letter, Mnuchin noted that if nothing is done, the Treasury will suspend the sale of state & local government series securities (SLGSS).

## House Republicans\* who would consider voting for a clean debt hike:



Rep. Charlie Dent (PA)



Rep. Pete King (NY)



Rep. Darrell Issa (CA)



Rep. David Valadao (CA)

\*Of the 24 House Republicans who voted for a clean debt hike in 2014 only these four have indicated interest in voting for one now

Sources: Alan Rappeport, "Deadline is set for Congress to raise debt ceiling," New York Times, June 29, 2017; Niv Elis, "GOP leaders have few sure votes on debt ceiling," The Hill, July 3, 2017.