

Hi All,

I'm not in class today because, unfortunately, my bus from DC got canceled on account of the weather.

But guess what!?

We still have current events.

Current Events

Please take out a piece of paper and write out the following:

- The title or subject of your current event.
- Its source
- The Facts:
 - Who
 - What
 - Where
 - When
 - Why

And most importantly – “Why does this matter?”

Next, I also want you to take a turn being Congressmen. First task at hand? Balance the budget. If you thought being a Congressman would be more fun, you're in good company. No one in DC has gotten to do anything but think about the budget this term... what makes y'all so special... hmm?

It could be worse... I thought of making you all Super Congress! (Members on the Super Committee.)

Once you are done with that assignment, which should likely take you into the second half of the class, I want you to take a turn as lobbyists!

These two things will be the primary focus of our next class as well.

Balancing the Federal Budget

As we've talked about in class, one of the main issues dividing Congress right now is our federal budget. In the abstract, the issue is pretty easy. If we are spending too much, we should spend less, right? The hard part, unsurprisingly, is figuring out WHERE to cut the budget. Every decision has real consequences, both practically and politically.

I thought it would be fun for you to see how this all really works by trying to balance the budget yourselves.

So today I want you to read the text below, which should give you a brief refresher on the budget process, and then to split up into three groups and figure out how to close our budget deficit.

This assignment should take you at least an hour if you're taking it seriously. It is accessible at: <http://crfb.org/stabilizethedebt/>

REMEMBER: Every decision you make should be backed up by a reason!

- Figure out who in your group is going to log the choices you make!
- One person should log what choices they have made, and WHY other choices were rejected.
- Note: You should be able to list one negative consequence / trade-off for each of your decisions.
 - What was cut? Why?
 - What groups will be upset about they're decisions?
 - How will this effect re-election? What are the likely political ramifications of these decisions?
- If there was disagreement please note that too!

Good luck!

Lobbying!

Among your group, decide what issue area you would like to cover, and then, from what perspective. For example:

If my group was researching healthcare, and we wanted to lobby as part of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN), I would go to their website, and look under "Advocacy" and then under **FACTS AND STATISTICS TO SHARE WITH POLICYMAKERS**.

The most important thing to remember about this exercise?

Be concise! Know your issue. Know WHAT you want to talk about in your 15 minutes, but be COMPLETELY INFORMED!

Questions to think about:

- What is your Ask? What do you want the Member to do? Are you asking for money? Are you asking for a signature? Are you asking for language in legislation?
- What other groups, if any, agree with your issue?
- Who is against you, politically?
- What do I stand to gain/lose by helping you?

You should ALL have a chance to talk! Most groups have more than one inter-related issue they would like to discuss!