

SWING VOTE SAM EXPLAINS

The Late Budget

SAM SAYS

"Thirty years since every spending bill was on time. Try that at your job."

Spending bills are due before the fiscal year starts on October 1. The last time Congress finished all of them on time was 1996.

The rest of the time: stopgaps, and when those lapse, shutdowns. The 2025 shutdown lasted 43 days, the longest governmentwide shutdown in U.S. history. Fiscal 2027 began on October 1, 2026 on another stopgap, good through December 11.

In a close House, a handful of members who answer to no party could make an on-time budget the price of their vote. That's an argument, not a statistic. Do the arithmetic.

The facts

1. All regular appropriations bills were enacted before the fiscal year began only four times since 1977, most recently in 1996, for fiscal 1997 (Congressional Research Service).[1]
2. The federal government shut down from October 1 to November 12, 2025, 43 days, the longest governmentwide shutdown in U.S. history.[2]
3. Fiscal 2027 opened under a continuing resolution, H.R. 6500, which funds the government through December 11, 2026.[3]

What you can do

1. Ask your representative why the budget is late, and what they'll do about it. **house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative**
2. Ask the candidates on your ballot whether they'll vote to pass spending bills on time.
3. Show up.

Scan to watch Sam explain it
swingvotesam.com/issues/budget-and-shutdowns

Sources
1. Congressional Research Service, "Continuing Resolutions: Overview of Components and Practices (R46595)". https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46595
2. CBS News, "Government shutdown history", updated November 13, 2025. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/government-shutdown-history-congress/
3. The White House, "Congressional Bill H.R. 6500 Signed into Law", September 2026. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2026/09/congressional-bill-h-r-6500-signed-into-law/

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