

# Washington Watch

Week ended June 9, 2025

Senate Republicans prepare to modify parts of the One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB); key issues remain, with July 4 deadline looming

## Highlights

Senate Republicans are preparing to put their mark on the One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB), a comprehensive tax and spending package that narrowly passed the House of Representatives May 22. Several Republican Senators have said they would like to see changes to the OB BB, which would require that the bill be sent back to the House for that chamber's approval before it heads to the President's desk for enactment.

Generally, the OB BB includes provisions that would extend, or make permanent, many provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Job Act (TCJA) scheduled to expire at the end of 2025. It also includes numerous other GOP tax policy priorities, as well as provisions regarding energy production, border security and spending reform.

To get some form of the OB BB passed, Republican policymakers will need to reconcile, among other things, their differences on the level and nature of tax cuts and spending cuts. Some Senate Republicans have suggested they would expand certain tax cuts, while others have indicated the bill should include additional spending cuts or longer phase-outs of many Biden-era energy tax incentives (which are, for budget "scoring" purposes, revenue losers). Disagreements among even small numbers of Republicans could derail GOP leaders' efforts to secure enough votes for passage; Republicans can afford to lose only three votes in either chamber.

As they negotiate what they are willing to keep and what they are going to change in, or remove from, the OB BB, Republicans will look to updated estimates released last week from non-partisan Congressional "scorekeepers," the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). A June 2 report from the JCT estimates that the tax provisions of the OB BB would increase the national debt by \$3.8 trillion over 10 years; taking into account proposed spending cuts, a June 5 letter from the CBO estimates the overall net effect of the OB BB would increase the national debt by \$3.0 trillion over 10 years, including the cost of debt service.

The bill would also increase the U.S.' debt limit – which is set by law – by \$4 trillion. While many Congressional Republicans are loath to vote for an increase to the debt ceiling, if Congress does not act before the ceiling is reached – an event that is expected to occur in August – the U.S. government would begin defaulting on its debt.

Republicans are still targeting enactment of the bill by July 4, even considering expected back-and-forth between the Senate and House as potential amendments to the bill are considered. Some observers have suggested that a more realistic date is late July: just before Congress' extended August recess, and the debt ceiling deadline.

A summary of key substantive terms of the OB BB may be found on the following page.

## What's in the bill

Among other changes, the OBBB would:

- Permanently extend the 37% top income tax rate;
- Permanently set the “base” amount of the estate, gift, and GST exclusions at \$15MM (the 2025 exclusions are \$13.99MM), beginning Jan. 1, 2026 (and inflation-adjusted thereafter);
- Permanently extend the \$750,000 principal cap on mortgage interest deductibility and disallow miscellaneous itemized deductions (formerly applicable to investment management fees, among other expenses);
- Restore business-friendly provisions – e.g., 100% bonus depreciation, immediate R&D expensing, and more generous limitations on business interest deductibility), boost the Qualified Business Income (QBI) deduction for owners of certain “pass-through” businesses (such as partnerships, S corporations and sole proprietorships), and add a new round of Qualified Opportunity Zone investment incentives;
- Increase the state and local tax (SALT) deduction cap, effective Jan. 1, 2025, to \$40,000 for most households, with a phase-down starting at \$500,000 that effectively keeps the current \$10,000 cap in place for those who make more than \$600,000 (taxpayers who are married filing separately are subject to lower caps and thresholds), and 1% annual increases to these dollar amounts from 2026 to 2033;
- Introduce new limitations on the tax benefit of itemized deductions for high-income taxpayers, effective Jan. 1, 2026;
- Tighten inflation adjustments used to calculate the alternative minimum tax (AMT) exemption and phase-out threshold amounts;
- Increase the excise tax rate on large private foundation net investment income (from the current 1.39% up to a top 10% rate for foundations with \$5 billion in assets) and large private college and university endowments (from the current 1.40% up to a top rate of 21%); and
- Reduce amortization benefits for professional sports team owners that acquire teams after the date of enactment.

The OBBB also includes new taxes on cross-border transactions. One section would, effective Jan. 1, 2026, impose a 3.5% excise tax on transfers to a recipient in foreign country by a “remittance transfer provider.” The tax would apply to such transfers by essentially anyone other than a U.S. citizen. Another section would increase the U.S. income tax and withholding rates on certain U.S. source income (such as U.S. dividends) of foreign individuals and entities considered tax residents of countries that impose what is considered an “unfair foreign tax.” The applicable tax rate would be increased by 5% in the first year and by 5% each subsequent year, capped at 20% over the statutory rate.

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