



Quality Benefits, Targeted Advocacy & Education for Today's Seniors  
**1-800-906-ASBA (2722)**

## **Budget Negotiations Intensify in Preparation for Sunday Meeting**

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Efforts to negotiate an agreement on a major deficit reduction package, combined with an increase in the federal government's debt ceiling, have accelerated in recent days and will continue through the weekend.

Following a July 7 White House meeting with congressional leaders from both parties, President Obama made a brief statement indicating that staff and leadership will be working through the weekend to pursue a compromise and that the principal negotiators will convene again on Sunday. The President emphasized that all participants in the White House meeting agree that "we have to get this done" before the August 2 deadline. He described yesterday's session as "a very constructive meeting" and said that all of the leaders "came in a spirit of compromise," although he cautioned that "the parties are still far apart on a wide range of issues."

While the President did not comment on specific issues that were discussed in yesterday's meeting, reports have circulated that the White House was planning to offer unspecified budget savings in Medicare and Social Security as part of a broad package that also includes new revenues. On another front, Medicare cuts also are addressed in a draft budget resolution developed by Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND). Chairman Conrad briefed committee members on his budget this week, but he has not yet indicated when he will release it to the public.

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) announced today that the House will not be in recess during the week of July 18-22, as previously scheduled. Leader Cantor indicated that the House will consider a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution that week. By calling off the recess, House leaders also ensure that members will be available to cast votes, if necessary, on any forthcoming budget agreement that may be ready for legislative action later this month.



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## **Senate Floor Debate Focuses on “Shared Sacrifice” in Deficit Reduction**

The Senate devoted several days this week to debating a motion to proceed to the consideration of legislation, S. 1323, that calls for “shared sacrifice in resolving the budget deficit.”

S. 1323 expresses the “sense of the Senate” that any agreement to reduce the federal budget deficit should require persons earning \$1 million or more annually to “make a more meaningful contribution to the deficit reduction effort.” Debate on this measure focused on tax issues, as well as entitlement reform and other options for achieving budget savings.

Yesterday, by a bipartisan vote of 74 to 22, the Senate approved a procedural motion that paves the way for the Senate to begin considering amendments to this bill when the floor debate resumes early next week. While this is largely a symbolic bill, a number of amendments on budgetary issues are likely to be offered as the Senate floor debate continues. Votes on such amendments may help to shape the ongoing deficit reduction negotiations between the White House and congressional leaders.

The American Senior Benefits Association (ASBA) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit association where membership is completely free. ASBA is committed to lifestyle enhancement through benefits, advocacy and education for the over-50 population. ASBA concentrates its efforts on the issues that are of greatest concern to its members. Through its partners and programs, ASBA members receive product and service discounts, as well as other benefits. Current ASBA membership stands at over 700,000 nationally.