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Photo by: Matt Rourke ****FILE**** [Government](#) workers, supporting union members and activists protest against the across-the-board federal spending cuts called sequestration at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia on March 20, 2013. (Associated Press)

Shutdown averted: Congress passes 2013 spending bill

By [Stephen Dinan](#) - The Washington Times

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Acting with striking unity, [Congress](#) on Thursday passed a \$1 trillion spending bill to fund the government for the rest of the fiscal year, heading off a government shutdown showdown and beginning to rearrange some of the sequester cuts.

The 318-109 vote in the House, following a similarly easy vote in the [Senate](#) on Wednesday, could signal the beginning of a new determination in both parties to avoid the kinds of bitter last-minute showdowns that dominated the previous two years.

President Obama has signaled he'll sign the measure into law.

"It's remarkable we're at this point," said [House Appropriations Committee](#) Chairman [Harold Rogers](#), Kentucky Republican.

The bill reaffirms the broad outlines of the sequester spending cuts, though it begins to tweak some specifics, including restoring money for slaughterhouse inspections and for the military's tuition assistance program.

Overall, the bill funds government through Sept. 30, or the end of fiscal year 2013. Current funding had been slated to run out on March 27, and Democrats who supported the bill said they did so because they didn't want to see a shutdown, which would have been the result if they blocked a bill.

"I will support this bill because we cannot allow the government to shut down in 6 days," said Rep. Nita M. Lowey, the ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee.

Even as they finished work on 2013 spending, both chambers have already turned their attention to their 2014 budgets. Just minutes before it approved the spending bill, the House passed the GOP budget, written by Rep. Paul D. Ryan, that calls for holding taxes steady and imposing deep cuts to projected spending in order to balance the budget in a decade.

The [Senate](#), meanwhile, is debating a Democratic-written budget that calls for tax increases, but that still predicts deficits for the foreseeable future.

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