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Subject: House passes budget in first step toward tax reform

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The House passed a budget today that paves the way for tax reform, slashes spending over 10 years and calls for lawmakers to find at least \$203 billion in extra savings from mandatory programs.

After months of intra-party wrangling, GOP leaders succeeded in advancing the fiscal 2018 resolution, H. Con. Res. 71 (115), on a 219-206 vote.

The deal is far from done, however, since the Senate has yet to bring its own plan to a floor vote, and budget writers must ultimately reconcile the differing packages during conference negotiations.

Because Senate Republicans have a smaller majority than their House counterparts, House Republicans are already bracing for a final product that's far different than the plan they have now sent to the Senate.

Before passage this week, House Budget Chairman Diane Black (R-Tenn.) touted her proposal's most fiscally conservative tenets, noting that the budget resolution would instruct congressional committees to cut billions of dollars from mandatory programs that pay for food stamps, housing aid and student loans.

"Can we not acknowledge that there are some programs that perhaps have fraud, waste and abuse we can take care of? ..." Black said on the floor. "That's what this budget does. It says, 'Open up your minds, think differently, let's not do things the same old way and keep putting the same old programs out there that maybe aren't working.'"

But Democrats contend that those budget instructions would take from the poor while the plan's reconciliation language enables Republicans to pursue tax cuts for the nation's wealthiest individuals.

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