

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3655

To establish a Bipartisan Task Force for Responsible Fiscal Action, to assure the economic security of the United States, and to expand future prosperity and growth for all Americans.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

Mr. COOPER (for himself and Mr. WOLF) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Budget, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To establish a Bipartisan Task Force for Responsible Fiscal Action, to assure the economic security of the United States, and to expand future prosperity and growth for all Americans.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Bipartisan Task Force  
5 for Responsible Fiscal Action Act of 2007”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE.**

2 Title III of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974  
3 (2 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end  
4 the following new section:

5 “ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE FOR RESPONSIBLE  
6 FISCAL ACTION

7 “SEC. 316. (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 “(1) TASK FORCE.—The term ‘Task Force’  
9 means the Bipartisan Task Force for Responsible  
10 Fiscal Action established under subsection (b)(1).

11 “(2) TASK FORCE BILL.—The term ‘Task  
12 Force bill’ means a bill consisting of the proposed  
13 legislative language of the Task Force introduced  
14 under subsection (c)(1).

15 “(3) FISCAL IMBALANCE.—The term ‘fiscal im-  
16 balance’ means the gap between the projected reve-  
17 nues and expenditures of the Federal Government.

18 “(4) MEDICARE.—The term ‘Medicare’ means  
19 the program established under title XVIII of the So-  
20 cial Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.).

21 “(5) SOCIAL SECURITY.—The term ‘Social Se-  
22 curity’ means the program of old-age, survivors, and  
23 disability insurance benefits established under title  
24 II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et  
25 seq.).

26 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE.—

1           “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a  
2 task force to be known as the ‘Bipartisan Task  
3 Force for Responsible Fiscal Action’.

4           “(2) PURPOSES.—

5           “(A) REVIEW.—The Task Force shall re-  
6 view—

7           “(i) analyses of the current and long-  
8 term actuarial financial condition of the  
9 Federal Government, including the Social  
10 Security and Medicare programs; and

11           “(ii) the gap between the projected  
12 revenues and expenditures of the Federal  
13 Government, including the revenues and  
14 expenditures attributable to the Social Se-  
15 curity and Medicare programs.

16           “(B) IDENTIFY FACTORS.—The Task  
17 Force shall identify factors that affect the long-  
18 term fiscal balance of the Federal Government,  
19 including the fiscal balance of the Social Secu-  
20 rity and Medicare programs.

21           “(C) ANALYZE POTENTIAL COURSES OF  
22 ACTION.—The Task Force shall analyze poten-  
23 tial courses of action to address factors that af-  
24 fect the long-term fiscal balance of the Federal

1 Government, including the fiscal balance of the  
2 Social Security and Medicare programs.

3 “(D) PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS AND  
4 LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE.—The Task Force  
5 shall provide recommendations and legislative  
6 language that will significantly improve the  
7 long-term fiscal balance of the Federal Govern-  
8 ment, including the fiscal balance of the Social  
9 Security and Medicare programs.

10 “(3) DUTIES.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall  
12 address the Nation’s long-term fiscal imbal-  
13 ances, including such imbalances attributable to  
14 the Medicare and Social Security programs and  
15 the gap between projected revenues and expend-  
16 itures under such programs, consistent with the  
17 purposes described in paragraph (2) and shall  
18 submit the report and recommendations re-  
19 quired under subparagraph (B).

20 “(B) REPORT, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND  
21 LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE.—

22 “(i) IN GENERAL.—On December 9,  
23 2008, the Task Force shall submit to the  
24 President and Congress a report on the  
25 long-term fiscal imbalances of the Federal

1 Government, including such imbalances at-  
2 tributable to the Social Security and Medi-  
3 care programs, that contains—

4 “(I) a detailed statement of the  
5 findings, conclusions, and rec-  
6 ommendations of the Task Force (in-  
7 cluding proposed legislative language  
8 to carry out such recommendations);  
9 and

10 “(II) the assumptions, scenarios,  
11 and alternatives considered in reach-  
12 ing such findings, conclusions, and  
13 recommendations.

14 “(ii) APPROVAL OF REPORT.—The re-  
15 port of the Task Force submitted under  
16 clause (i) shall require the approval of not  
17 less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 16 members of the  
18 Task Force.

19 “(4) MEMBERSHIP.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall  
21 be composed of 16 members designated pursu-  
22 ant to subparagraph (B).

23 “(B) DESIGNATION.—Members of the  
24 Task Force shall be designated as follows:

1           “(i) The President shall designate 2  
2           members, one of whom shall be the Sec-  
3           retary of the Treasury, who shall be the  
4           Chairperson of the Task Force, and the  
5           other of whom shall be an officer or em-  
6           ployee of the executive branch.

7           “(ii) The majority leader of the Sen-  
8           ate shall designate 4 members from among  
9           Members of the Senate.

10          “(iii) The minority leader of the Sen-  
11          ate shall designate 3 members from among  
12          Members of the Senate.

13          “(iv) The Speaker of the House of  
14          Representatives shall designate 4 members  
15          from among Members of the House of  
16          Representatives.

17          “(v) The minority leader of the House  
18          of Representatives shall designate 3 mem-  
19          bers from among Members of the House of  
20          Representatives.

21          “(C) DATE.—Members of the Task Force  
22          shall be designated by not later than 30 days  
23          after the date of enactment of this section.

24          “(D) PERIOD OF DESIGNATION.—Members  
25          shall be designated for the life of the Task

1 Force. Any vacancy in the Task Force shall not  
2 affect its powers, but shall be filled not later  
3 than 14 days after the date on which the va-  
4 cancy occurs in the same manner as the origi-  
5 nal designation.

6 “(E) TERMINATION.—The Task Force  
7 shall terminate on the date that is 90 days  
8 after the Task Force submits the report re-  
9 quired under paragraph (3)(B).

10 “(5) ADMINISTRATION.—

11 “(A) QUORUM.—Twelve members of the  
12 Task Force shall constitute a quorum for pur-  
13 poses of voting, but a lesser number may meet  
14 and hold hearings.

15 “(B) VOTING.—

16 “(i) PROXY VOTING.—No proxy voting  
17 shall be allowed on behalf of members of  
18 the Task Force.

19 “(ii) POLICY MATTERS.—The Task  
20 Force may not vote on policy matters until  
21 after November 4, 2008.

22 “(C) MEETINGS.—

23 “(i) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later  
24 than 30 days after the date on which all  
25 members of the Task Force have been des-

1           ignated, the Task Force shall hold its first  
2           meeting.

3           “(ii) MEETINGS.—The Task Force  
4           shall meet at the call of the Chairperson or  
5           a majority of its members.

6           “(D) HEARINGS.—Subject to subpara-  
7           graph (G), the Task Force may, for the purpose  
8           of carrying out this section, hold such hearings,  
9           sit and act at such times and places, take such  
10          testimony, receive such evidence, and admin-  
11          ister such oaths the Task Force considers advis-  
12          able.

13          “(E) COMPENSATION.—Members of the  
14          Task Force shall serve without any additional  
15          compensation for their work on the Task Force.  
16          However, members may be allowed travel ex-  
17          penses, including per diem in lieu of subsist-  
18          ence, in accordance with sections 5702 and  
19          5703 of title 5, United States Code, while away  
20          from their homes or regular places of business  
21          in performance of services for the Task Force.

22          “(F) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Upon the  
23          request of any member of the Task Force, a  
24          Federal agency shall provide technical assist-



1           ance to all members of the Task Force in order  
2           for the Task Force to carry out its duties.

3           “(G) INFORMATION.—

4                   “(i) RESOURCES.—Any member of the  
5           Task Force shall have authority to access  
6           materials, resources, statistical data, and  
7           other information the Task Force deter-  
8           mines to be necessary to carry out its du-  
9           ties from the Library of Congress, the  
10          Chief Actuary of the Social Security Ad-  
11          ministration, the Chief Actuary of the Cen-  
12          ters for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the  
13          Congressional Budget Office, and other  
14          agencies and instrumentalities of the exec-  
15          utive and legislative branches of the Fed-  
16          eral Government (including the Depart-  
17          ment of the Treasury, the Department of  
18          Health and Human Services, the Office of  
19          Management and Budget, the Government  
20          Accountability Office, and the Joint Com-  
21          mittee on Taxation). Each agency or in-  
22          strumentality shall, to the extent permitted  
23          by law, furnish such information to the  
24          Task Force upon written request by a  
25          member of the Task Force.

1           “(ii) RECEIPT, HANDLING, STORAGE,  
2           AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION.—  
3           Information shall only be received, han-  
4           dled, stored, and disseminated by members  
5           of the Task Force and its staff consistent  
6           with all applicable statutes, regulations,  
7           and Executive orders.

8           “(iii) LIMITATION OF ACCESS TO TAX  
9           INFORMATION.—Information accessed  
10          under this subparagraph shall not include  
11          tax data from the United States Internal  
12          Revenue Service, the release of which  
13          would otherwise be in violation of law.

14          “(H) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Task Force  
15          may use the United States mails in the same  
16          manner and under the same conditions as other  
17          departments and agencies of the Federal Gov-  
18          ernment.

19          “(6) FUNDING.—There are authorized to be ap-  
20          propriated such sums as are necessary to carry out  
21          the purposes of the Task Force.

22          “(c) EXPEDITED CONSIDERATION OF TASK FORCE  
23          RECOMMENDATIONS.—

24          “(1) INTRODUCTION.—

1           “(A) IN GENERAL.—The proposed legisla-  
2           tive language contained in the report submitted  
3           pursuant to subsection (b)(3)(B) shall be intro-  
4           duced within the first 10 calendar days of the  
5           111th Congress (or on the first session day  
6           thereafter) in the House of Representatives and  
7           in the Senate by the majority leader of each  
8           House of Congress, for himself, the minority  
9           leader of each House of Congress, for himself,  
10          or any member of the House designated by the  
11          majority leader or minority leader. If the Task  
12          Force bill is not introduced in accordance with  
13          the preceding sentence in either House of Con-  
14          gress, then any Member of that House may in-  
15          troduce the Task Force bill on any day there-  
16          after. Upon introduction, the Task Force bill  
17          shall be referred to the appropriate committees  
18          under subparagraph (B).

19          “(B) COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION.—A  
20          Task Force bill introduced in either House of  
21          Congress shall be jointly referred to the com-  
22          mittee or committees of jurisdiction and the  
23          Committee on the Budget of that House, which  
24          committees shall report the bill without any re-  
25          vision and with a favorable recommendation, an

1 unfavorable recommendation, or without rec-  
2 ommendation, not later than 10 calendar days  
3 after the date of introduction of the bill in that  
4 House. If any committee fails to report the bill  
5 within that period, that committee shall be  
6 automatically discharged from consideration of  
7 the bill, and the bill shall be placed on the ap-  
8 propriate calendar.

9 “(2) EXPEDITED PROCEDURE.—

10 “(A) IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTA-  
11 TIVES.—

12 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5  
13 days of session after the date on which a  
14 Task Force bill is reported or discharged  
15 from all committees to which it was re-  
16 ferred, the majority leader of the House of  
17 Representatives or the majority leader’s  
18 designee shall move to proceed to the con-  
19 sideration of the Task Force bill. It shall  
20 also be in order for any Member of the  
21 House of Representatives to move to pro-  
22 ceed to the consideration of the Task  
23 Force bill at any time after the conclusion  
24 of such 5-day period.

1           “(ii) MOTION TO PROCEED.—A mo-  
2           tion to proceed to the consideration of the  
3           Task Force bill is highly privileged in the  
4           House of Representatives and is not debat-  
5           able. The motion is not subject to amend-  
6           ment or to a motion to postpone consider-  
7           ation of the Task Force bill. A motion to  
8           proceed to the consideration of other busi-  
9           ness shall not be in order. A motion to re-  
10          consider the vote by which the motion to  
11          proceed is agreed to or not agreed to shall  
12          not be in order. If the motion to proceed  
13          is agreed to, the House of Representatives  
14          shall immediately proceed to consideration  
15          of the Task Force bill without intervening  
16          motion, order, or other business, and the  
17          Task Force bill shall remain the unfinished  
18          business of the House of Representatives  
19          until disposed of.

20          “(iii) LIMITS ON DEBATE.—Debate in  
21          the House of Representatives on a Task  
22          Force bill under this paragraph shall not  
23          exceed a total of 100 hours, which shall be  
24          divided equally between those favoring and  
25          those opposing the bill. A motion further

1 to limit debate is in order and shall not be  
2 debatable. It shall not be in order to move  
3 to recommit a Task Force bill under this  
4 paragraph or to move to reconsider the  
5 vote by which the bill is agreed to or dis-  
6 agreed to.

7 “(iv) APPEALS.—Appeals from deci-  
8 sions of the chair relating to the applica-  
9 tion of the Rules of the House of Rep-  
10 resentatives to the procedure relating to a  
11 Task Force bill shall be decided without  
12 debate.

13 “(v) APPLICATION OF HOUSE  
14 RULES.—Except to the extent specifically  
15 provided in this paragraph, consideration  
16 of a Task Force bill shall be governed by  
17 the Rules of the House of Representatives.  
18 It shall not be in order in the House of  
19 Representatives to consider any Task  
20 Force bill introduced pursuant to the pro-  
21 visions of this subsection under a suspen-  
22 sion of the rules or under a special rule.

23 “(vi) NO AMENDMENTS.—No amend-  
24 ment to the Task Force bill shall be in  
25 order in the House of Representatives.

1           “(vii) VOTE ON FINAL PASSAGE.—In  
2           the House of Representatives, immediately  
3           following the conclusion of consideration of  
4           the Task Force bill, the vote on final pas-  
5           sage of the Task Force bill shall occur  
6           without any intervening action or motion,  
7           requiring an affirmative vote of  $\frac{3}{5}$  of the  
8           Members, duly chosen and sworn. If the  
9           Task Force bill is passed, the Clerk of the  
10          House of Representatives shall cause the  
11          bill to be transmitted to the Senate before  
12          the close of the next day of session of the  
13          House.

14          “(B) IN THE SENATE.—

15                 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5  
16                 days of session after the date on which a  
17                 Task Force bill is reported or discharged  
18                 from all committees to which it was re-  
19                 ferred, the majority leader of the Senate or  
20                 the majority leader’s designee shall move  
21                 to proceed to the consideration of the Task  
22                 Force bill. It shall also be in order for any  
23                 Member of the Senate to move to proceed  
24                 to the consideration of the Task Force bill

1 at any time after the conclusion of such 5-  
2 day period.

3 “(ii) MOTION TO PROCEED.—A mo-  
4 tion to proceed to the consideration of the  
5 Task Force bill is privileged in the Senate  
6 and is not debatable. The motion is not  
7 subject to amendment or to a motion to  
8 postpone consideration of the Task Force  
9 bill. A motion to proceed to consideration  
10 of the Task Force bill may be made even  
11 though a previous motion to the same ef-  
12 fect has been disagreed to. A motion to  
13 proceed to the consideration of other busi-  
14 ness shall not be in order. A motion to re-  
15 consider the vote by which the motion to  
16 proceed is agreed to or not agreed to shall  
17 not be in order. If the motion to proceed  
18 is agreed to, the Senate shall immediately  
19 proceed to consideration of the Task Force  
20 bill without intervening motion, order, or  
21 other business, and the Task Force bill  
22 shall remain the unfinished business of the  
23 Senate until disposed of.

24 “(iii) LIMITS ON DEBATE.—In the  
25 Senate, consideration of the Task Force



1 bill and on all debatable motions and ap-  
2 peals in connection therewith shall not ex-  
3 ceed a total of 100 hours, which shall be  
4 divided equally between those favoring and  
5 those opposing the Task Force bill. A mo-  
6 tion further to limit debate on the Task  
7 Force bill is in order and is not debatable.  
8 Any debatable motion or appeal is debat-  
9 able for not to exceed 1 hour, to be divided  
10 equally between those favoring and those  
11 opposing the motion or appeal. All time  
12 used for consideration of the Task Force  
13 bill, including time used for quorum calls  
14 and voting, shall be counted against the  
15 total 100 hours of consideration.

16 “(iv) NO AMENDMENTS.—No amend-  
17 ment to the Task Force bill shall be in  
18 order in the Senate.

19 “(v) MOTION TO RECOMMIT.—A mo-  
20 tion to recommit a Task Force bill shall  
21 not be in order under this paragraph.

22 “(vi) VOTE ON FINAL PASSAGE.—In  
23 the Senate, immediately following the con-  
24 clusion of consideration of the Task Force  
25 bill and a request to establish the presence

1 of a quorum, the vote on final passage of  
2 the Task Force bill shall occur and shall  
3 require an affirmative vote of  $\frac{3}{5}$  of the  
4 Members, duly chosen and sworn.

5 “(vii) OTHER MOTIONS NOT IN  
6 ORDER.—A motion to postpone or a mo-  
7 tion to proceed to the consideration of  
8 other business is not in order in the Sen-  
9 ate. A motion to reconsider the vote by  
10 which the Task Force bill is agreed to or  
11 not agreed to is not in order in the Senate.

12 “(viii) CONSIDERATION OF THE  
13 HOUSE BILL.—

14 “(I) IN GENERAL.—If the Senate  
15 has received the House companion bill  
16 to the Task Force bill introduced in  
17 the Senate prior to the vote required  
18 under clause (vi) and the House com-  
19 panion bill is identical to the Task  
20 Force bill introduced in the Senate,  
21 then the Senate shall consider, and  
22 the vote under clause (vi) shall occur  
23 on, the House companion bill.

24 “(II) PROCEDURE AFTER VOTE  
25 ON SENATE BILL.—If the Senate

1 votes, pursuant to clause (vi), on the  
2 bill introduced in the Senate, the Sen-  
3 ate bill shall be held pending receipt  
4 of the House message on the bill.  
5 Upon receipt of the House companion  
6 bill, if the House bill is identical to  
7 the Senate bill, the House bill shall be  
8 deemed to be considered, read for the  
9 third time, and the vote on passage of  
10 the Senate bill shall be considered to  
11 be the vote on the bill received from  
12 the House.

13 “(C) NO SUSPENSION.—No motion to sus-  
14 pend the application of this paragraph shall be  
15 in order in the Senate or in the House of Rep-  
16 resentatives.”.

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