THE GRIDLOCK ILLUSION

If Washington seems to get much less done than it once did, it is partly because it is trying to do so much more.

BY R. SHEP MELNICK
It is hard to find a news article on Congress these days in which the word “gridlock” does not figure prominently. After months of tense negotiations, Congress and President Barack Obama barely avoided going over the “fiscal cliff” in January, and their last-minute agreement leaves many more months of inconclusive bargaining to come. The legislative branch has yet to revise a national immigration policy that pleases no one, or even to pass a stripped-down version of pathway-to-citizenship legislation that enjoys widespread popular support. Everyone knows that Social Security is headed toward insolvency, and that the longer we wait, the harder it will be to fix the problem. But Congress after Congress has done nothing. Most important, almost everyone recognizes that in coming years we must both raise taxes and cut entitlements in order to avert fiscal disaster, yet Congress has taken no significant steps in that direction. Meanwhile, its approval rating has slipped below 10 percent, to the lowest levels ever recorded.

The most common public response to these developments has been to blame our elected representatives for engaging in petty partisanship, to charge that they are beholden to “special interests,” and to insist that all would be fine if our leaders would only listen to “the people.” But “the people” are really a fractious and increasingly partisan lot, and in 2012 they sent back to Washington nearly all of the hyperpartisan politicians who had achieved such stunningly low approval ratings during the previous two years. As the political scientist Richard Fenno has pointed out, voters may hate Congress, but they love their own member of Congress. Consequently, most members run for Congress by running against it. Voters routinely reward individual legislators for engaging in behavior that regularly produces the collective action they abhor.

This pattern has led some scholars to conclude that the heart of our current problems lies in our institutional arrangements. Our unusually complex structure of government—one that combines separation of powers, bicameralism, and federalism—not only embeds numerous “veto points” in the legislative process, but frustrates accountability by making it nearly impossible for voters to know whom to blame or reward for public policy. Our current discontents, particularly on budget issues, give new urgency to a critique

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of our constitutional arrangements that dates back to Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era. From the turn of the century through the 1960s, progressives and New Dealers insisted that our “horse and buggy” institutions were incompatible with the demands of modern government. The result, they charged, was the “deadlock of democracy,” which in effect meant that an unholy alliance of conservative Southern Democrats and Republicans in Congress could block the initiatives of liberal Democratic presidents.

“Gridlock” is the new term favored by critics who are frustrated with Washington, and it is used by people across the political spectrum, not just liberals. The triumph of this neologism over the more conventional descriptors “stalemate” and “deadlock” is not an accident. It reveals how criticism of our institutional arrangements has subtly shifted as government has expanded. The term “gridlock” caught on in 1980 as a way to describe traffic congestion so severe that cars block multiple intersections,
As the government does more and more, policies increasingly overlap and, all too frequently, begin to contradict one another.

防止运动在任何方向。它很快成为描述国会政治的首选隐喻，用于描述在总统罗纳德·里根1981年初期立法胜利后，美国的长期承诺持续在阿富汗，那里的国旗在2009年飘扬，并通过许多其他具有争议的政策。

美国开始感受到政治学家休·赫克洛所称的“政策拥堵”带来的影响。随着政府做得越来越多，政策越来越重叠，相互碰撞，而且，经常性地，开始相互矛盾。例如，“能源政策”自20世纪70年代以来，已发展成为各种相互矛盾的政策和计划的杂乱集合，一些政策寻求补贴或促进各种形式的能源使用和生产，而其他政策则加以征税和阻止。同样，福利政策中的矛盾同样普遍，阻碍任何形式的前进。
health care policy, and what we now call budget policy—which includes virtually everything our enormous national government does. The “stalemate” argument focused on the obstacles to creating an extensive regulatory and welfare state. “Gridlock,” in contrast, refers to the difficulty of managing and coordinating the extensive welfare and regulatory state that we have somehow managed to build.

There can be no doubt but that the gridlock argument captures key features of American government. Who could deny that the Constitution establishes what civics textbooks call an “obstacle course on Capitol Hill” that makes it excruciatingly difficult to enact legislation on controversial issues? We should remember, though, that the Founders had good reason to make the legislative process so arduous. James Madison was not enamored of every component of the Constitution he had helped to create—he was especially dismayed by the clause providing for equal representation of all states in the Senate—but he provided a sophisticated defense of the features that are commonly blamed for gridlock.

Making it easier to pass legislation, Madison observed, would increase the “mutability of the law.” The resulting “public instability” would not only undermine public confidence and weaken the United States internationally but would give an “unreasonable advantage” to “the sagacious, the enterprising, and the moneyed few over the industrious and uniformed mass of the people.” But by providing an opportunity for a “sober second thought,” bicameralism would reduce the possibility that legislation would be the product of momentary public passions or manipulation by political insiders.

Furthermore, by requiring very broad majorities to enact laws, the Constitution reduces the power of what Madison called “majority faction.” By combining a lower house whose members serve two-year terms with an upper house whose members enjoy six-year terms, the Constitution also combines responsiveness to current public opinion with attention to the long-term interests of the nation. Moreover, by dividing the legislature into two parts and granting veto power to the president, the Constitution prevents the legislative branch—which “necessarily predominates” in republican government, Madison wrote—from “drawing all power into its impetuous vortex.” In other words, it protects both judicial independence and presidential power.
Today’s critics of the Constitution tend to be less skeptical than Madison was of simple majoritarianism. From Woodrow Wilson a century ago to University of Texas law professor Sanford Levinson today, they have argued that the greatest shortcoming of the Constitution is its failure to allow popular majorities to prevail. What about the danger of majority faction and tyranny of the majority? Certainly no contemporary law professor can be indifferent to the plight of politically unpopular minorities. The unstated assumption of contemporary progressives is that this job can safely be left to the courts. Since we already have an activist judiciary, we can now tolerate an activist Congress. Let Congress do more, then let the Supreme Court invalidate those portions of the law that five of the justices consider unfair.

The Constitution’s critics also tend to assume that the dangers created by government inaction are far greater than those caused by rash, premature, or intemperate action. They express no concern about the “mutability” and “instability” that so worried Madison. They tend to assume—despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary—that government’s mistakes can be easily remedied. In reality, government programs create constituencies that are highly organized, acutely aware of the benefits they receive from government, and strategically placed to block substantial change. In other words,
delays are often temporary, but mistakes last forever.

Inaction can certainly be costly but sometimes there are advantages to inaction. Consider the case of acid rain. It became a political issue in the 1970s, but Congress did nothing to address it until 1990. For many years, this was considered a prime example of gridlock—just as congressional inaction on greenhouse gases is today. But the regulatory scheme Congress eventually used to control acid rain, marketable emission rights, has proved much better at reducing pollution quickly and cheaply than the kind of command-and-control regulation Congress relied upon almost exclusively in the 1970s. In other words, delay produced smarter government action.

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olitical parties have long been the chief mechanism for building majorities that pull together our constitutionally separated institutions. For most of the 20th century, ours were internally heterogeneous “umbrella” parties that provided the building blocks for legislative coalitions without guaranteeing partisan majorities in either house of Congress. In the early 1990s, however, it was clear that our legislative parties were undergoing a sea change.

By the time the Republicans took control of Congress in 1995, party leaders in the House of Representatives had acquired powers that rivaled those of the famous “czar” Speakers of the House (Joe Cannon, for example) who had reigned a century earlier. Within the House, most of the “veto points” so frequently decried for promoting stalemate had been eliminated. Today, the Speaker effectively determines which bills come to the floor, as well as the rules for amending and voting on each. Committee chairs, who once rose to power on the basis of seniority and exercised near-baronial powers, are now under the control of party leaders. Votes on important issues follow party lines. What the majority-party leadership in the House wants, it almost always gets. During the presidency of George W. Bush, for example, Republicans briefly gained control of both the House and the Senate, and they rammed through a series of tax cuts and a major expansion of Medicare with virtually no support from Democrats.

Advocates of party government had assumed that stronger, more ideological parties would allow one dominant party to give coherent direction to the government as a whole. On occasion that is true. But neither the Republicans nor the Democrats have managed to build
resilient electoral majorities. Indeed, as soon as one party seems to be gaining effective control of government, the voters revoke its mandate. The 2010 election, which ended the Democrats’ brief monopoly on power by giving the House to the Republicans, was just the latest manifestation of this dynamic. The same thing happened in 1994 and 2006. The public, it seems, is not enamored of either party, and prefers divided government to party government. In short, party polarization, once considered a cure for stalemate, now only seems to make the problem worse.

On the surface this combination of constitutional structure, partisan polarization, and a fickle electorate seems to create the perfect storm of gridlock. Before we despair, though, it would be worth taking a closer look at the extent of the problem. On many fronts, things are not as bad as they seem. Consider, for example, some of the steps the federal government took in response to the financial crisis of 2007–08:

• In the autumn of 2008, Congress created the $700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) to address the subprime mortgage crisis. The Bush administration managed to push its proposal through Congress despite strong opposition from Republicans.
  • With only tepid support from the White House, Congress bailed out—and essentially took over—the federally created mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, adding $142 billion to the total bailout.
  • Several months later, the Obama Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve announced a plan to pump an additional $1 trillion into the banking system.
  • After providing billions of dollars to keep General Motors, Chrysler, and AIG afloat, the federal government played a central role in managing their downsizing. The government suddenly became the largest stockholder in three of the nation’s biggest companies.
  • Even before the financial meltdown, Congress passed a $168 billion bipartisan stimulus package negotiated by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader John Boehner,
The United States has responded to the financial crisis much more aggressively than has Europe, with its supposedly more effective parliamentary governments, and our banks are now in better shape than Europe’s. Much of the TARP money has been repaid, and the auto companies seem to be recovering. Whether or not one approves of these policies, it is hard to describe the government that initiated them as gridlocked.

One could respond to the remarkable events of 2008 and ’09 by saying that the American political system is capable of responding to emergencies, but not so good at fashioning policies that prevent them in the first place. So let’s look back at the first seven years of the George W. Bush administration. Here, it seemed, was a recipe for stalemate. The electorate was divided 50-50 in presidential elections, with Bush losing the popular vote in 2000 and eking out a narrow victory in 2004. The Senate, too, was divided 50-50 in 2001, and soon shifted to the Democrats when James Jeffords of Vermont left the GOP. The Republican margin in the House after the 2000 election was only nine votes, the slimmest partisan margin in 50 years. In the 2006 elections the Democrats regained control of both the House and the Senate, and the country returned to divided government. Animosity between the parties (and against the president) ran unusually high. But consider what Congress accomplished during those years:

• It passed the No Child Left Behind Act, the biggest change in federal education policy since 1965 and the most prescriptive federal education legislation ever enacted.
• It created Medicare Part D, the largest entitlement expansion since passage of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965.
• It passed the Bush administration’s tax cuts in 2001, 2003, and 2004. Together they constituted the largest tax cuts in American history.
• Despite stiff opposition from Republicans, it approved the far-reaching McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform law.
• It passed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, which CQ Weekly described as “the biggest increase in the regulation of publicly traded companies since the Depression.”
A few of these laws received bipartisan support; passage of others relied almost entirely on Republican votes. While some of these policies might have been ill advised and excessively partisan, no one would describe the Congresses that produced them as “do nothing.”

Foreign and defense policy rarely comes up in discussions of gridlock. Indeed, those who have complained most bitterly about legislative stalemate also criticized the Bush administration for acting too aggressively and Congress for delegating too much authority to the executive. Foreign policy during the Bush administration hardly looks like gridlock: The administration launched wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (in each case with congressional approval), announced a controversial new policy on “preventative wars,” and established the equally controversial detention facility at Guantánamo Bay. Meanwhile, Congress established the Department of Homeland Security, enacted the USA Patriot Act, overhauled the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, and passed several pieces of legislation on the use of military commissions and the rights of detainees. When one looks at the sweep of U.S. foreign policy over the course of the 20th century—especially the pivotal role the United States played in defeating two vicious and expansionist totalitarian powers—our constitutional structure seems to have served us well.

The record of the Congress that convened in 2009 rivals that of any since the historic 89th of 1965–66. The 111th Congress demonstrates how partisan polarization can produce dramatic policy change when one party seizes control of the White House and both chambers of the legislative branch. While many of these enactments are well known, it is worth recounting them to indicate the range of congressional action:

- Most important, Congress enacted a profound overhaul of the American health care system, extending coverage to 30 million Americans; imposing extensive mandates on insurance carriers, employers, and state governments; creating new insurance exchanges; imposing an array of new taxes, fees, and penalties; extending drug benefits; and making significant cuts in the Medicare program.

- Four months later, Congress enacted a 2,300-page law to create a new regulatory structure for the entire financial services sector and to establish a mechanism for “winding down” failing banks and brokerage houses. According to CQ Weekly, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street
Reform and Consumer Protection Act “touches just about every major piece of financial regulatory law of the 20th century.” It created two new regulatory agencies, and required these and other agencies to produce 250 additional sets of regulations to govern the financial sector.

- Soon after convening, Congress passed another stimulus package, to pump $800 billion into the slowing economy. The legislation included a diverse mix of tax cuts; an extension of unemployment benefits; grants to the states for infrastructure, education, and health care; and measures to encourage the development of clean energy.

- After decades of debate, Congress passed legislation authorizing the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate the content and marketing of tobacco products.

- Congress made major changes in the federal student loan program, and provided more than $4.35 billion for the Obama administration’s “Race to the Top” initiative to encourage innovation in elementary and secondary education.

- By repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” Congress allowed gays to serve openly in the military. It also confirmed two Supreme Court nominees, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan, by wide margins and without the threat of a filibuster.

On top of this, the Obama administration augmented the U.S. military commitment in Afghanistan, the second major American war zone “surge” in recent years. It substantially increased American drone strikes against suspected terrorists. In short, 2009 and ’10 were years of intense partisan animosity but not of gridlock.

To be sure, over the past four years Congress has failed to pass any immigration legislation. An omnibus, jerry-built climate change bill passed the House but died quietly in the Senate. The administration’s signature health care legislation nearly failed for want of a 60th vote in the Senate. If the Perils-of-Pauline story of the Affordable Care Act illustrates the difficulty of enacting major legislation, it also points to a shortcoming of the conventional gridlock narrative. “Gridlock” is almost always used to imply that an obstinate minority is frustrating the will of the majority. But in 2010 Obamacare was in grave danger because public opinion was turning against it. If anything, the health care battle shows that the federal government is capable of taking dramatic action even when public support is shallow.
The stalemate/gridlock argument is misleading not only because it ignores so many accomplishments, but also because it focuses so intently on just one small part of domestic policy, namely passage of major pieces of legislation at the national level. Lost in this picture are the daily decisions of administrators, judges, and state and local officials, as well as members of Congress engaged in the quotidian business of passing appropriations, reauthorizations, and budget reconciliation bills. Taken individually, these decisions might seem like small potatoes, but collectively they can produce significant policy change.

Critics of the Constitution overlook the fact that by creating multiple “veto points,” our political system simultaneously creates multiple points of access for policy entrepreneurs and claimants. Every “veto point” that can be used to block action is also an “opportunity point” that can be used to initiate or augment government activity.

Consider, for example, the problem of global warming. Neither Congress nor the White House has yet taken steps to reduce carbon emissions. But state governments have acted. Nine northeastern states reached an accord promising to reduce power plant emissions by 10 percent by 2020. In 2006, California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed an agreement to curb global warming by capping certain emissions, declaring, “California will not wait for our federal government to take strong action on global warming.”

More important, the Supreme Court has ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate greenhouse gases. In response, the EPA has issued new rules that limit carbon dioxide emissions from industrial sources. This is just the beginning of its regulatory efforts. Given the structure of the Clean Air Act, it is unlikely that this will be a particularly effective or efficient form of regulation. But the worse the EPA proposal, the stronger the incentives for congressional action. After all, if Congress fails to act, the EPA’s flawed plan will go into effect. As The New York Times reported,
“Administration officials consistently say they would much prefer that Congress write new legislation . . . but they are clearly holding it in reserve as a prod to reluctant lawmakers.”

To take another example, how did Congress manage to pass controversial legislation guaranteeing every disabled student a “free appropriate public education,” complete with an “individualized education plan,” provision of “related services,” and a promise that each student would be placed in the “least restrictive environment”? The answer is that the courts acted first, suggesting (rather obliquely) that students with disabilities might have a constitutional right to an adequate education. This forced state governments to spend much more on special education, which led them to demand that the federal government provide the money needed to comply with this federal mandate, which led Congress to provide both more money and more federal regulation, which led to more litigation and more federal requirements, which led to state demands for even more money, and so on. This is a vivid illustration of how separation of powers and federalism can produce not gridlock, but a game of institutional leapfrog that results in a steady expansion of government programs.

How did affirmative action—highly unpopular with the American public—become embedded in so many federal programs? Slowly, subtly, and at times surreptitiously, a long series of court decisions, agency rules, and complex legislative provisions injected the presumption of proportional representation into federal civil rights programs. How did the federal government come to set national standards for state mental institutions, schools for the developmentally disabled, nursing homes, and prisons? Largely through litigation and consent decrees negotiated by the Department of Justice.

Why has the means-tested Medicaid program grown faster than the supposedly sacrosanct Medicare program? After all, the former serves the poor, while the latter provides benefits to one of the most potent political forces in American politics, the elderly. According to Lawrence Brown and Michael Sparer of the Columbia School of Public Health, part of the explanation is the shrewd incrementalism of congressional entrepreneurs such as Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), who steadily added federal Medicaid mandates to budget reconciliation bills in the late 1980s. The combination of state and federal funding and control over Medicaid, Brown and
Sparer note, had the effect of “prompting coverage expansions during good times (the feds paid most of the bill) and deterring cutbacks even in bad times (every state dollar saved meant two or three federal dollars lost).”

Instead of promoting a “race to the bottom,” our post–New Deal “cooperative federalism” has stimulated expansion of the welfare state. This effect is not limited to health care. The respected federalism scholar Richard Nathan has concluded that “U.S. federalism’s dominant effect has been to expand the scope and spending of the social sector.”

“Incrementalism may not get much press, but it does work,” says one congressman.

Those looking for evidence of gridlock in Washington might point to Congress’s failure in 1998 to pass legislation imposing a large tax on tobacco products and limiting tobacco advertising. Soon after that bill died in the Senate, though, state attorneys general reached a settlement with tobacco companies that included a $250 billion settlement—to be paid to state treasuries—and unprecedented limits on advertising, sponsorships, and lobbying by tobacco companies. Having lost narrowly in one arena, antitobacco activists prevailed in another.

When the Securities and Exchange Commission was criticized for regulating Wall Street too laxly, another state attorney general, New York’s Eliot Spitzer, stepped into what he perceived as a policy void. When the Obama administration appeared too tolerant of AIG’s bonuses, Spitzer’s successor, Andrew Cuomo, took aggressive steps to expose the miscreants. In area after area, the competition and multiple avenues of access created by the Constitution provide opportunities to prevail for those who seek to expand the public sector. Policy entrepreneurs have learned how to use these features of our political system to their advantage. As Representative Waxman, one of the most successful of these entrepreneurs, once put it, “Incrementalism may not get much press, but it does work.”

In *The Welfare State Nobody Knows* (2008), political scientist Christopher Howard argues that the American welfare state is much larger than is generally recognized. We fail to appreciate its size because our welfare state provides benefits through so many programs (at
least 77 separate means-tested federal programs provide assistance to the poor) and in such indirect ways (such as loan guarantees, refundable tax credits, and tax exemptions). Our fragmented welfare state reflects our fragmented political system. As Howard suggests, we need to understand how our peculiar political system has produced a different type of welfare state, not simply keep repeating the mistaken claim that it has produced a small one.

At the heart of all serious political analysis lies Henny Youngman’s famous response to the question “How’s your wife?”: “Compared to what?” At one time or another we have all been frustrated or even enraged by the delays, irrationalities, and complexities of our political system. If we were starting from scratch, no one in his right mind would give Wyoming, Vermont, or Rhode Island two seats in the U.S. Senate. The big question is, What is the alternative? Most critics seem to assume that the answer is parliamentary government. Not, of course, the unstable, factional, multiparty coalition governments one finds in Italy or Israel. Nor would they welcome the insulated, faction-ridden, and corrupt system of Japan, where a single party has dominated for more than 60 years. Rather, reformers assume that we would naturally develop the stable two- or three-party Westminster-style parliamentary government found in Britain, Australia, and (at one time, at least) Canada.

My guess is that these reformers would have a hard time convincing most Americans that the British form of government is more democratic than what we have now. Who voted for Prime Minister David Cameron other than 34,000 members of his Witney constituency? What do you mean, ordinary people can’t vote in party primaries—you intend to allow party bosses to choose the nominees? Elections held whenever the incumbent prime minister finds it convenient? A powerful elite senior civil service without much oversight by elected representatives? Significant movement in that direction would provoke a populist revolt in this country that would make the Tea Party look, well, like weak tea.

Do we have any evidence that parliamentary governments are any better at governing? The answer, I think, is no. The best analysis I know of is a Brookings Institution volume edited by political scientists R. Kent Weaver and Bert A. Rockman, *Do Institutions Matter? Government Capabilities in the United States and Abroad*. At the risk of
oversimplifying the book’s careful analysis, let me note three of the editors’ conclusions, which ring even truer today than when the book was published 20 years ago.

First, most of the problems facing the United States today “are shared by all industrial democracies.” In particular, “problems with balancing budgets are ubiquitous. All elected (and most unelected) governments are reluctant to impose losses on pensioners. . . . Particular institutional arrangements do not cause these governance problems; they are inherent in complex societies and in democratic government.”

Second, there are “direct tradeoffs” between institutional capabilities. The fragmented American political system “generates a lot of policy innovation” because it promotes “policy entrepreneurship from disparate sources.” But this innovation “tends to be at the piecemeal level of individual programs rather than comprehensive, sector-wide policies.” Unfortunately, institutional arrangements that are better at producing comprehensive reform are also “likely to create risks of policy instability” and to overlook interests not well represented within party organizations.

Third, the contrast between parliamentary and separation-of-powers systems “captures only a small part” of the differences between regimes. “Second-tier institutional arrangements” such as electoral rules and norms established within legislative bodies “influence government capacity at least as much as do the separation or fusion of executive and legislative power.”

If fundamental political change such as a shift to a parliamentary system is unlikely to produce significant benefits, and even less likely to gain public support, then it behooves us to focus instead on the “second-tier institutional arrangements” that are equally important and considerably more malleable. Consider, for example, that today a single U.S. senator can put a “hold” on a nomination or a piece of legislation because the Senate conducts so much of its business through unanimous consent agreements. Use of both senatorial holds and filibusters has escalated in recent years, often with serious consequences. Senate rules—even those on filibuster and cloture—can probably be changed by majority vote once obstructionism becomes too obvious and too unpopular.

In 2005, Democrats used the filibusters to block a number of President Bush’s judicial nominees. This led the Republican majority to threaten to pull the trigger on “the nuclear option,” that is, to limit filibusters
considered outmoded. Legislation exempting budget reconciliation bills from filibusters has made the budget process somewhat more rational and majoritarian—and allowed the Obama administration’s health care proposal to become law.

There are many other ways Congress and the executive can alter second-tier rules to increase our capacity to cope with the serious problems that confront us. For example, during the 1990s the so-called PAYGO rules (for “pay-as-you-go”) helped Congress reduce the federal budget deficit by requiring that any new tax cuts or spending be offset by new revenue or by savings elsewhere in the budget. “Fast-track” procedures have helped temper parochialism in trade legislation. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission gave Congress a mechanism to reduce unnecessary military spending by shutting down the many congressionally protected bases the Pentagon

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Conventional arguments about gridlock not only ignore our political system’s capacity for major policy change, but imprudently focus our attention on constitutional changes that are neither feasible nor likely to address our present discontents. The gridlock metaphor tends to gloss over the fact that our political institutions are surprisingly good at innovation, but depressingly bad at coordinating the many responsibilities we have taken on. Nowhere is this more apparent than in our inability
to bring taxing and spending into line. Since 2000, Congress has done an excellent job of enacting tax cuts and creating new entitlements. But that has only made our fiscal problems worse. Imposing budgetary pain in a political system as responsive to public opinion as ours is extraordinarily hard. Making progress on this crucial task does not require systemic institutional reform, but, rather, adjustment of a variety of second-tier rules in order to focus public attention on the aggregate and long-term consequences of frenetic government activity.

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