# M

## Mandatory

A term that usually modifies either "spending" or "amount." "Mandatory spending," also known as "direct spending," refers to budget authority that is provided in laws other than appropriation acts and the outlays that result from such budget authority. Mandatory spending includes entitlement authority (for example, the Food Stamp, Medicare, and veterans' pension programs), payment of interest on the public debt, and nonentitlements such as payments to states from Forest Service receipts. By defining eligibility and setting the benefit or payment rules, Congress controls spending for these programs indirectly rather than directly through appropriations acts. "Mandatory amount" refers to the level of budget authority, outlays, or other budgetary resources that are controlled by laws other than appropriations acts. Budget authority provided in annual appropriations acts for certain programs is treated as mandatory because the authorizing legislation entitles beneficiaries to receive payment or otherwise obligates the government to make payment. (*See also* Appropriated Entitlement; Appropriations *under* Forms of Budget Authority *under* Budget Authority; Multiple-Year Authority *and* No-Year Authority *under* Duration *under* Budget Authority; Committee Allocation; Direct Spending Authority; Discretionary; Entitlement Authority; Gramm-Rudman-Hollings.)

## Mark-Up

Meetings where congressional committees work on language of bills or resolutions. For example, at Budget Committee mark-ups, the House and Senate Budget Committees work on the language and numbers contained in budget resolutions and legislation affecting the congressional budget process.

## Means of Financing

Ways in which a budget deficit is financed or a budget surplus is used. A budget deficit may be financed by the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) (or agency) borrowing, by reducing Treasury cash balances, by the sale of gold, by seigniorage, by net cash flows resulting from transactions in credit financing accounts, by allowing