

Media – When the Budget Won’t Balance, Just Get Rid of the Budget Committee? (The Fiscal Times) April 17, 2018

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It may sound like a joke — Erik Sherman of Forbes [said](#) it seemed like something “from The Onion or Andy Borowitz at the New Yorker, only with less humor and pith” — but Sen. Mike Enzi (R-WY), chair of the Senate Budget Committee, has suggested that since the federal budget is so far out of balance, and likely will be for years, Congress might as well just eliminate the committee he leads.

You know, the committee whose main responsibility is to produce a workable budget blueprint.

With deficits expected to hit [\\$1 trillion a year](#) in 2020 and continue rising for the foreseeable future, it’s becoming difficult if not impossible to produce a budget plan that both balances within a 10-year window and can win enough votes to pass. According to [The Hill](#), the problem is so severe and seemingly intractable that Enzi “is floating the idea of getting rid of the Budget panel altogether.”

The Senate Budget Committee was created in 1974 to draft budget plans for Congress and bring better structure to the budgeting process, but it has become increasingly erratic in recent years, with deadlines missed and spending plans sometimes skipped altogether. (You can brush up on the committee’s troubled history [here](#).) A replacement for the current budgeting process is being explored by the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform, which held its first meeting Tuesday.

Given the budget committee’s current state, it may make sense to eliminate it, assuming Congress can come up with a new process that’s more effective, and Enzi said he has high hopes for the bipartisan reform process: “I’m really counting on that special committee to come up with a way to make budgets valuable again.”

But there may be a more fundamental issue at stake, one that emerges from the simple budgetary facts produced by the current Congress. The Budget Committee can't create a balanced budget because taxes are being cut and spending is rising at the same time, and there is no political agreement on how to address the issue. The budgeting process worked in the past, Forbes' Sherman writes, because "no one was idiotic enough to slash revenue, boost spending, and pretend that the result would be sustainable."

Link:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/eriksherman/2018/04/17/republican-senate-budget-chairman-lets-give-up-on-budgets/#516cf6dd6f4b>