

# Congress: The Snail's Pace Race

I don't keep count, but I see lots of headlines like this one from *The Hill*, dated December 5: "Congress races to beat deadline on shutdown."

Reporters Jordain Carney and Niv Elis tell us that "Congress is racing the clock" and working on a "tight time frame" to pass yet another stopgap spending measure ("continuing resolution") so that the government doesn't go into one of its perennial fake "shutdown" productions.

Congress passed its last continuing resolution on November 21, giving it a full month to get this one done.

I'm writing this on December 7, the 78th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Congress declared war the next day. What's all this "racing the clock" business about?

"The House has passed over a hundred bills, but the Senate refuses to take them up," writes Nicholas J. Sarwark, national chair of the Libertarian Party, on Facebook. "No Congress has passed an actual budget in over a decade. The only things they agree on are continuing resolutions to keep spending, symbolic gestures, and extending the Patriot Act. Impeachment would be the first thing of substance the Congress has done in a long time."

On one hand, I often thank the Almighty for gridlock. If Congress isn't doing anything, Congress isn't doing anything stupid or evil, right?

On the other hand, if Congress isn't doing anything, why do we continue to pay their salaries, hand them significant portions of our earnings, and listen to them flap their gums 24/7 about how important they are?

And on the third hand (yes, I'm a mutant with a third hand), over the last few decades, presidents of both "major" parties have increasingly taken up the slack of getting stupid and evil things done while Congress eats chocolate bonbons or has rolling office chair races or whatever the heck it is they do up on Capitol Hill instead of work.

All in all, if we have to vest such awesome powers in government, it makes more sense to give them to 535 politicians who have trouble agreeing on anything than to one politician who always knows (in an Ernst Stavro Blofeld kind of way) exactly what he wants. Gridlock sounds better than dictatorship to me.

But if these layabouts can't even agree on a budget, they shouldn't get to turn in substandard "continuing resolution" work as a substitute.

Get cracking and pass a budget or shut down for real, guys.