

[111 STAT 697]

**SEC. 10123. SENATE TASK FORCE ON CONSIDERATION OF BUDGET MEASURES.**

(a) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.—The Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate shall each appoint 3 Senators to serve on a bipartisan task force to study the floor procedures for the consideration of budget resolutions and reconciliation bills in the Senate as provided in sections 305(b) and 310(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

(b) REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE.—The task force shall submit its report to the Senate not later than October 8, 1997.

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**EXPLANATORY STATEMENT OF MANAGERS  
(H. CONF. REPT. 105-217)**

*24. Senate task force*

HOUSE BILL

No provision.

SENATE AMENDMENT (SECTION 787)

During consideration of S. 949 (spending reconciliation bill in the Senate) the Senate adopted by a vote of 92 to 8 an amendment offered by Senator Byrd (number 148) which provided new floor procedures for the consideration of reconciliation legislation in the Senate. The most significant aspect of the Byrd amendment was the proposal to adopt cloture like procedures at the conclusion of consideration. The amendment called for changing the current law's 20 hour limit on consideration to 30 hours of debate. In addition, it called for imposing a filing requirement for all amendments to be considered after 15 hours. This is a significant departure from current law in that it would have the effect of closing off the amendment process once all time has expired.

Current law provides that an unlimited number of amendments and motions are in order, without debate, at the end of time. Although this is not explicitly set forth in section 305 of the Budget Act, it is the interpretation that has governed the Senate's consideration of budget resolutions and reconciliation legislation. At the insistence of a number of Senators, current Senate practice has permitted (by unanimous consent) a very brief time for debate (usually between 2 and 4 minutes, equally divided) prior to the vote on such amendments. This at least permits proponents and the managers to lay out for their colleagues the basic issue presented by the amendment. This has resulted in what many refer to as a 'vote-a-rama' at the end of time. In this situation Senators are forced to vote on scores of amendments with little or no debate.

In addition to ending the 'vote-a-ramma', the Byrd amendment provides that the time for debate on individual amendments be reduced from 2 hours to 30 minutes for amendments in the first degree, from 1 hour to 20 minutes for amendments in the second degree or debatable motions and appeals, and after 15 hours debate on all debatable items would be limited to 20 minutes. The Byrd amendment also provides that the motion to reduce time be debatable for 30 minutes and that time may be yielded back only by unanimous consent. Current law permits this motion to be voted on without debate and time to be yielded back as a matter of right.

CONFERENCE AGREEMENT (SECTION 10123)

The conference agreement provides for a bipartisan task force in the Senate to review the floor procedures governing consideration of budget resolutions and reconciliation bills. The task force is to report to the Senate by October 8, 1997.

*[Joint Explanatory Statement on the Committee of Conference on the Balanced Budget Act of 1997; (Conference Report), Committee on the Budget, House of Representatives, 105th Congress, 1st Session, Washington D.C. 1997.]*