

Senate And House Leaders Select Members To Serve On “Super Committee”

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Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has named the [first three members who will serve on the deficit “Super Committee”](#) charged with finding \$1.5 trillion in cuts to the federal budget before the end of the year:

Patty Murray (D-WA), Senate Democratic Conference Secretary

Max Baucus (D-MT), Senate Finance Committee Chairman

John Kerry (D-MA), Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman

Senator Patty Murray was selected to be the co-chair of the twelve-member committee, officially called the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, which will be comprised of six Democrats and six Republicans. House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) will choose the other co-chair who will serve with Murray as well as two other Republican members. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) will each choose three members from their respective conferences to serve on the committee. **[see update at end of this post.]**

In a [statement on the Super Committee appointments](#) released yesterday, Reid said: “I have appointed three senators who each possess an expertise in budget matters, a commitment to a balanced approach and a track record of forging bipartisan consensus. I have great faith in Senator Murray as the co-chair of the committee. Her years of experience on the Senate Budget and Appropriations committees have given her a depth of knowledge on budget issues, and demonstrated her ability to work across party lines. Senators Baucus and Kerry are two of the Senate’s most respected and experienced legislators. Their legislative accomplishments are matched only by their records of forging strong bonds with their Republican colleagues.”

None of the Democrats chosen by Reid were part of the “Gang of Six” which last month proposed a plan that would have called for significant cuts to Medicare and Social Security. Labor unions and liberal groups made appeals to Reid not to appoint Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) and Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), two members of the Gang of Six who voted for the Simpson-Bowles plan that would have raised the Social Security retirement age from 67 to 69 years old.

Nancy Pelosi has demonstrated an adamant resolve to [protecting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security](#), and doubtless her choices of members who will serve on the Super Committee will reflect her strong advocacy of the entitlement programs.

Republicans were already expressing opposition to Reid's choices, particularly his choice of Patty Murray which is [being called a blatantly political maneuver](#). A senior Senate Republican aide said Murray's appointment was unbelievable, and that the chairperson of the partisan Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee shouldn't sit on the bipartisan Super Committee.

RNC Chairman Reince Priebus called on Senator Reid to immediately withdraw his appointment of Murray.

"The Select Committee is no place for someone whose top priority is fundraising and politics," Priebus said.

The Super Committee must agree to a final proposal by Thanksgiving in order to get a bill through both chambers of Congress so that it can be signed by President Obama by December 23. If the panel deadlocks and fails to agree to a proposal, it would trigger automatic cuts in defense and non-defense spending.

UPDATE (12:09pm): As of the writing of this article we just learned that House Speaker John Boehner and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell have made their selections the [Republicans who will sit on the Super Committee](#). The choices are as follows:

House Speaker Boehner's picks:

Jeb Hensarling (R-TX), Vice Chairman for the House Financial Services Committee

Dave Camp (R-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means

Fred Upton (R-MI), Chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Boehner selected Jeb Hensarling to serve as committee co-chair with Patty Murray.

Senate Minority Leader McConnell's picks:

Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Senate Finance Committee

Pat Toomey (R-PA), Senate Budget Committee

Rob Portman (R-OH), Senate Budget Committee, Senate Armed Services Committee



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